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NEW STATESMAN

Vietnam: the children's inheritance

by John Pilger

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Sanctions busting: failure of the system

Propaganda, said F. M. Cornford, is 'that branch of the art of lying which consists in very nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies.' It is not a bad motto for the perspective of Labour's Rhodesian record.

In February last year James Callaghan wrote privately to President Kaunda of Zambia. Kaunda had expressed impatience at dealing with a country which – while professing hostility to Ian Smith – would knowingly let its oil companies supply his illegal regime. In his reply, which called on a friendship alleged to span thirty years, Callaghan pledged his own and his Government's honour to an emotional denial of the accusation. Indeed, he was astonished it should be made: in eleven years, he suggested, there had never been reason to suspect that British oil firms were keeping the Smith regime supplied with oil. There was one cautious qualification. Just recently, Callaghan wrote, a 'private individual' had produced some evidence of offences, and this was being examined urgently. There might be culprits – and if so, 'I shall bring the culprits to book'. Kaunda must have been amazed that the British Government should need a 'private individual' – the reference was to Mr 'Tiny' Rowland of Lonrho – to reveal what every barman in Central Africa had known for years.

Since then, London has become filled with the jostlings of eminent persons anxious to ensure that those 'brought to book' shall not include themselves. Oilmen write to *The Times* saying that at all relevant times they cleared themselves with all relevant civil servants. Civil servants claim that whatever they were told they surely passed on to the relevant ministers. Few ministers will admit relevance, but those who did hear anything heard it in the presence of greater ones. If there is a scapegoat being readied for the altar, it is Sir Harold Wilson, who already qualifies in Whitehall as 'ancient history'.

The trouble, it is said, lay in his *personal style of government*. Wilson politics, we are now told, were the politics of fantasy. Wilson was interested, not in the real world, but in manipulating shadows, and the administrative machine did no more than obey his orders. Defending Sir Harold against such charges may be difficult: still, it will not be a valid inquiry which explains the whole debacle in terms of one man's character.

No doubt if we are to have a useful inquiry, individuals – many of them personally upright – will have to be exposed in a way our soft and secretive society is unused to. In particular, the cherished doctrine of the anonymity of Civil Service advice will have to be demolished. But for this very reason it should be plain that it is a system, rather than personalities, which must be investigated. The meaning of the sanctions story, placed in the context of modern Labour politics, is that it reveals the British executive system – a system which, to their party's grave danger, the Labour leaders have embraced, and never challenged – as being essentially a machine for enlarging the human inadequacies of politicians: for cosseting their fantasies, insulating them from reality, and generating the deceits that such an undertaking makes necessary.

To discover something of what happened, material from several sources must be correlated: the memories, where available, of Ministers and officials; the erratic but indispensable record of the Crossman diaries; the sleek but oddly artless legalisms of the BP submission to Bingham; and such glimpses as have been published, in this journal and elsewhere, of the inner workings of the Whitehall committee system.

Lord (George) Thomson says in his statement of 7 September that the 1968 decision to wink at the oilmen's illegalities was conditioned by the aftermath of forced devaluation, and he is clearly right to underline the involvement of the issue with economics. *Turn to page 320*

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Notes on Politics and Power

Whited sepulchre at Southport

Christopher Hitchens writes: The Liberal Party presents a wretched spectacle at the best of times, but its public face over the last ten days has been even less edifying than usual. As the delegates foregathered in Southport for their annual assembly, there was a palpable miasma of hypocrisy. 'I really think it's a bit much the way the typical British press only concentrates on Thorpe – we've got such a good agenda this year too, but are they interested in *the real issues*? . . . By the way I was talking to this chap from the *Mirror* the other day and he told me they'd got some amazing stuff on tape about Norman Scot'.

But there was more than the usual quotient of doublethink about the press (from a party that has courted any kind of publicity every which way for the past decade). By solemnly and publicly asking Thorpe to stay away, they had guaranteed that any move he made would create a sensation. What did they fear from his arrival? That the doors would swing open and he would stride in, flanked by Marion and Rupert with a Great Dane named Checkers lolloping at his heels? How seriously do they think their assembly is taken by the outside world?

There was every kind of Pecksniffery on display. Everybody thought that David Steel had acted most promptly and correctly in stripping Thorpe of his Foreign Affairs portfolio – the promptness deriving from the fact that he hadn't told Thorpe he was going to do so. And everybody thought that Steel was right to join Lord Evans in issuing the high-minded appeal to stay away from Southport.

The most egregious justification for this policy was to be had from Lord Evans himself – President of the Party, with lawyer's jowls and mutton-chop whiskers to match. He told me that he thought if Jeremy came there would be talk and gossip, and that this might be prejudicial to the impending court case! I thought this was the most ingenious argument I heard. It's for his own good, don't you see?

What is objectionable about this performance is that the Liberals seem only now to have discovered that Jeremy Thorpe is an arrogant, wilful and slightly tricky man. When he was riding high, and dragging mediocre MPs into the Commons on his coat-tails (that means you, Penhaligon, and you, Smith, you especially) these qualities were lauded to the skies. The rank and file were encouraged into uncritical adulation, and they haven't quite been broken of it yet. The leader-cult has rebounded on them, and in an effort to save its face the party elite has played fast and loose with the presumption of innocence. At one of the excruciating pre-conference 'commissions' (on Civil Liberty), Lord Wigoder asked from the chair: 'If you attempt to produce a Liberal definition of liberty, is there not a danger that you will arrive at something with which the Conservative Party would enthusiastically agree?' He spoke more truly than he knew. The Liberals seem to accept the McNee line that if the police charge somebody then there must be *something* to it.

MSC money down dairy drain

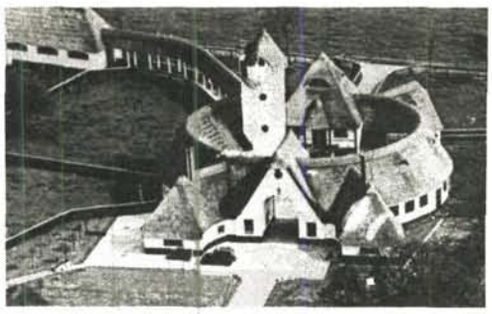
Patrick Wintour writes: One of the most praised and publicised Job Creation Schemes funded by the Manpower Services Commission has collapsed in acrimony. The project, to restore a massive thatched Hertfordshire mansion (*right*) built in 1927 by a loony American millionaire and to turn it into 17 different craft and design workshops, is only two thirds completed with virtually all the MSC's £60,000 grant consumed. Mrs Kate Lawrenson, the project's leading light, is unemployed, in substantial debt, and expects her London home to be appropriated by Barclays as collateral on outstanding loans.

It was in October 1975 that Mr Peake, the owner of the mansion (which is known as the Node Dairy), asked Mrs Lawrenson to start a craft centre at the near-derelict building. In mid-1976 she heard of the Job Creation Scheme. Mrs Lawrenson's son Paul freely admits that they dreamed up how much money they needed from the MSC: 'We realised you get what you ask for, so we invented a figure.' They came up with £66,632, and the scheme was launched in a blaze of publicity in August 1977 with a workforce of six tradesmen and 14 youngsters.

The Peakes promised a ten year lease to the Node Centre Society Limited – a special company set up for the purposes of the project – and on the strength of this Mrs Lawrenson managed to secure an overdraft facility with Barclays. The overdraft has already reached £15,000 and is very much needed. There were often many more people working on the site than stipulated by the MSC. At the wage level allowed by the MSC it was only possible to hire elderly retired labour: one of the 'unemployed school leavers' was a 68 year-old woman and the site foreman was 74. Work progressed slowly and inefficiently.

In some desperation Mrs Lawrenson tried to speed the project up by paying for better builders, well above the MSC rate. But still more money was needed. In May this year the Lawrensons decided that the best way of improving their security, and thus achieving a bigger overdraft, was to increase the value of their own home in London, by using the MSC labour to modernise it. Unfortunately no tight check was kept on the number of man-hours used at the private house and the number at the dairy. When Mrs Lawrenson went on holiday in July her son Paul took over and, although not officially appointed or elected to any position, proceeded to order a healthy new drinks cabinet and two brand new cars for the centre, hired a personal assistant and overhauled the telephone system.

A showdown came at the end of July when the Peakes accused the Lawrensons of misusing public funds by transferring MSC-funded



labour and materials to their own house. Mrs Lawrenson then announced that the project had ended and sacked all the workers. An injunction was placed on Mrs Lawrenson to stop her from going to the dairy again. At this point the MSC finally began to take an interest and called in their auditors.

RTZ get tough with WOW

Christopher Hird writes: In what appears to be the first move of its kind, RTZ, the international mining company, have sent out solicitors letters to pressure groups campaigning over the plight of aborigines in Australia, where RTZ have a big operation.

Just before RTZ's annual meeting in May War on Want wrote an open letter to the company's chairman, Sir Mark Turner, in which they accused RTZ of pursuing a policy which was leading to the genocide of the aborigines. In support, they produced a confidential report prepared by RTZ's Australian off shoot – CRA Exploration.

The report was a study of the mineral potential in the 39 aboriginal areas, in which eight reserves were described as 'areas with good to excellent mineral potential considered to be prime targets which should be given top priority in our future programmes.'

Following questions at the annual meeting Sir Mark said that Lord Shackleton – a Labour peer on the RTZ board – was going the next day to Australia and would look into the allegations. His investigation (taking five days, say RTZ; much less, says one aborigine organisation) convinced him that allegations of RTZ policies driving people from their homes were untrue. So Goodman, Derrick wrote a three page letter to WOW and Colonialism and Indigenous Minorities Research (CIMRA), a World Council of Churches financed organisation involved in the campaign.

Lord Shackleton (left) and Lord Goodman

The Goodman, Derrick letter dealt at some length with RTZ's anxiety to avoid legal action: they did not want to appear as a large and powerful organisation oppressing a smaller, poorer one. The rest of the letter dealt with denials of the WOW allegations. In dealing with the CRA report, RTZ stress that although individual aborigine reserves may be designated

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as 'special priority', this is within the reserves as a group, which come well down their total list of priorities. Less than 0.4 per cent of the CRA budget was to be spent on aboriginal areas in 1978. However WOW say they, the CRA report and RTZ all have different views on what constitutes an aboriginal area.

The Goodman, Derrick letter finished by saying that RTZ were willing to supply any other information that might be required. But RTZ were not willing 'because they are at the disadvantage of being a company of substance and resources, to allow any degree of scurrility to be directed against them.'

There appear to be few, if any, previous examples of a large public company sending a solicitor's letter to WOW, Anti Apartheid or any similar organisation. RTZ say they took the decision because they wanted WOW, CIMRA and their supporters to realise how defamatory the accusations were and because they felt that a charity should make especially sure that what it said was true.

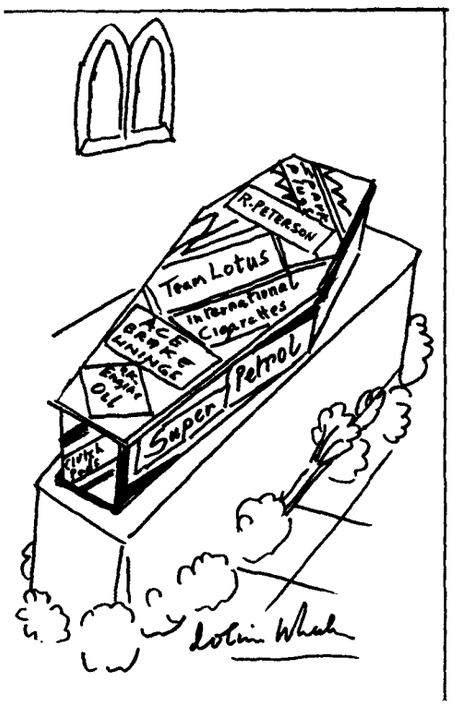
New Labour view on race

Glen Davis writes: The next meeting of the Labour Party's NEC, on 29 September, is expected to approve a report by its Committee on Race Relations recommending amendments to the Race Relations Act designed, according to Frank Allaun MP, a committee-member, 'to make it easier to obtain a conviction'.

Section 70 of the 1976 Race Relations Act makes it a crime to 'incite racial hatred'. Recent prosecutions have shown the unwillingness of juries to convict under this section, and, in any case, the Act as it stands does not permit prosecutions for racist demonstrations, nor against the more subtle propaganda of some racialist groups. The proposed amendment would alter 'hatred' to 'hostility', thereby broadening the Act.

The report has already been approved in principle by the NEC, but was referred back after Merlyn Rees protested at proposed changes in the Public Order Act. The report wants this Act strengthened so that local authorities can initiate a ban on a march, as well as the police. The Home Secretary would still have the final decision if either ban was opposed.

For the time being it seems as though the NEC proposals will remain merely an expression of opinion. They have a good chance of being taken up by the Government, but likely Tory opposition seems to rule out the possibility of the Race Relations Act being amended under the present Parliament.



Lucky Jim

Francis Wheen writes: Canada is the only other parliamentary democracy where Jim Callaghan could leave the electorate waiting at the church as he did last week. Nowhere else does the Prime Minister have such complete freedom of action to call an election at any time the fancy takes him during his term of office. The French National Assembly can be dissolved before its term is over only by the President, after consultation with the Prime Minister and the President of the Assembly – and in any case not more than once in twelve months (thus ruling out such occurrences as our two elections of February and October 1974). The German Bundestag can only be dissolved prematurely by the President, and only if there is a successful motion of no-confidence in the Federal Chancellor (as happened in 1972). Italy too has a fixed term for both houses of parliament, unless they lose a motion of no-confidence. The Prime Minister must then resign and the President, if unable to cobble together a new government, can call fresh elections – though not in the last six months of his own term of office.

In most democracies it is thus impossible for an opportunist Prime Minister to go to the country during a temporary economic upturn. And most governments are also controlled by being accountable to the electorate more frequently than ours. The duration of a British government was reduced from seven to five years by the Parliament Act of 1911, but this is still a remarkably long term if one accepts the theory of three-year trade cycles. (The greatest incongruity in the British system is that our own local government is run on a continenstal-style fixed term of four years.) The Australian House of Representatives continues for three years, as does the Swedish Riksdag. The governments of Denmark, Finland, West Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands all hold office for four years. Britain's half-decade term is exceeded only by France, where the Assembly ploughs on for six years.

Free Speech

Don't sue, organise

Every week, it seems a worker is awarded compensation by an industrial tribunal for unfair dismissal. Every week, it seems, a woman (or more risibly a man) complains of sex discrimination, in circumstances which any reasonable person would regard as absurd. Small employers constantly chorus that employment protection laws are stunting initiative, reducing investment, and driving them out of business. Employers claim that the legislation of the last few years has given workers and unions too much legal protection.

However, while the new workers' rights have transformed industrial relations, ancient and divisive principles of common law have not been challenged. For example, labour law almost completely ignores the fact that workers organise themselves in unions. The law takes no notice of the basic truth that industrial relations is about employers and groups of workers, not single individuals. The reference point for all employment law is always an individual worker's contract of employment.

Judges usually treat contracts of employment in the same way as any other contract. In theory two parties of equal bargaining power agree on mutually acceptable terms. But this view of the employment relationship is grotesquely out of touch with industrial reality which shows a clear disparity in bargaining power between an individual worker – or if the workplace is organised, his or her union – and the corporation.

Even today the union has no place as of right in any litigation (but it may provide representation), so in a factory where a hundred women get paid less than men for similar work, the union can't bring a claim against the employer. An individual has to come forward and bring *her* claim based on *her* contract. If a shop steward is sacked, a claim must be made by that worker for what he has lost. No mention is made of the harm done to the other workers by losing one of their activists, or by the attack on their right to union organisation.

Even on issues where the collective rights are obvious, organisations of workers can't exercise them. When workers want their boss to recognise their union, or demand disclosure of information, or claim terms and conditions recognised in their industry, the final step is a legal claim made by one individual that according to his or her contract, (s)he is being underpaid.

In other areas, the law prevents working people from taking collective action. A tenants' association can't claim against a landlord who has failed to carry out repairs in all its members' flats. A community group can't take joint action against a factory owner who pumps noxious fumes into the atmosphere, or against a local authority which fails to provide services.

It is precisely because workers, women, tenants, minority groups and consumers achieve strength through organisation that the law turns their collective demands into individual grievances.

Yet despite this legal support for individualism, and the rights in the Employment Protection Acts, Parliament has not yet guaranteed certain basic rights. There is no positive right to work, to strike or to persuade others to, to black products, to demonstrate, to picket, to organise a union or to be treated equally. The only way workers can enforce these rights, and the most effective way of enforcing statutory rights, remains unchanged – by organisation and industrial action.

Jeremy McMullen

Jeremy McMullen is a barrister and district officer of the General & Municipal Workers Union. His book – Rights at Work: a workers' guide to employment law is *published this week by Pluto Press. (£2.25 paperback, £12 hardback).*

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Labour and Rhodesia

by Bruce Page

Additional research by Martin Bailey and Bernard Rivers

(continued from front page)

Crossman makes plain that from the start the Cabinet Committees into which all vital Rhodesian decisions were diverted – RX, in the code then used, together with the overseas and defence committee – were dominated by economic ministers, chiefly Callaghan as Chancellor, to whom is attributed the judgment (Vol II, 142) that Britain 'couldn't afford sanctions'. (Today, of course, Denis Healey heads the economic contingent on the Rhodesia committee, re-labelled GEN 12).

Crossman records Chancellor Callaghan as Chancellor devoting as much as 'one-third' of his time to Rhodesia (Vol I, 407). And against this must be set the remarkably *small* amount of decision-making required of anyone thought likely to take a principled, or even a well-informed position on Rhodesia. As Barbara Castle's unpublished diaries will confirm, her early post as Minister for Overseas Development, in spite of its intimate links with Black Africa, did not include a position on RX. And within a year of UDI, Wilson found it convenient to move her still further away, to Transport. In Crossman's view Barbara Castle had paid the price for having advocated an effective sanctions policy. But she remained in the *Cabinet*, and as the subtleties of the Committee system were even less understood then than now, that was enough for Wilson's left-wing constituency. The weeding process, however, continued: in summer 1966 Arthur Bottomley was removed from the Commonwealth Office, largely because of his unyielding attitude to Ian Smith, and replaced with Herbert Bowden. Wilson explained to Crossman that

> *Bert had to be selected . . . and when he had told* the Queen she had said how delighted she was that that kind of non-political man was in the job. (Vol. I, 608)

Wilson's manipulations

By December 1966, in the run-up to the fruitless *Tiger* discussions between Wilson and Smith, the process of packing the decision-making process was almost complete:

> Yet another RX at 9.45, when completed consideration of the brief . . . Then in streamed the Cabinet which was a mere formality. Barbara Castle was opening something in Paris and Judith Hart, who had not been at RX wasn't at this meeting either. Nor were Arthur Bottomley and Fred Lee. All Harold's Commonwealth experts were just absent. And the Cabinet didn't even see the brief . . . (Vol II, 143.)

The system is infinitely manipulable in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary, because almost every aspect of it except the membership of the Cabinet 'facade' is secret, and because there is no Parliamentary or other check on ministerial or official appointments, nor any procedure by which Parliament can monitor the development of complex policies in detail. Awkward officials – or their advice – can be by-passed as readily as awkward Ministers.

For instance, Arthur Bottomley recalls that in the early stages of the crisis Commonwealth Office officials like Sir Saville Garner were emphatic that even a strong sanctions policy would not produce quick results. Yet Wilson gained much early support, inside and outside Britain, with his confident assertion that Rhodesian resistance would crumble within 'weeks, not months'. This extraordinary misjudgment, Bottomley is convinced, was based on an expedition to Africa by Wilson's private secretary Oliver Wright, a diplomat almost innocent of African experience. (Sir Oliver is installed today as Ambassador in Bonn.)

Rhodesian policy, and sanctions policy, was therefore made by Wilson working principally with economic ministers who were perfectly aware that sanctions could not work unless the question of British trade with South Africa was faced.

The policy grew as just one aspect of a system of delusions on which Labour's ruling trio – Wilson, Brown and Callaghan – based their own ambitions. George Thomson says that it was the precipitate devaluation of 1966 which compelled the cynical deal with Shell and BP. But that devaluation was precipitate precisely because it was delayed far past the point at which a $2.80 pound was realistically defensible. Labour leaders and Treasury Knights, were determined to achieve economic growth without incurring the pain of devaluation – and, as Crossman records, a growing chorus of economic disbelief was shut out by making devaluation a taboo subject inside Cabinet.

This involved some remarkable circle-squaring: there should be no real sanctions against Southern Africa, but with American help some outwardly-convincing oil sanctions could be procured, which might bluff the Rhodesians. Even such modest action would enfeeble sterling, but remedy was found in having the pound 'built into the American system' (Vol I, 117). There was, of course, a price for this final element in the cardhouse: support for American policy in Vietnam, which of course meant support for an even more colossal delusion, based in its turn upon thorough-going deceit of the American people.

By 1968 Labour's faith in these illusions was much shaken, which change was not lost upon the oilmen and their contacts in Whitehall. As BP's submisson puts it, the British Government now manifested:

> in public a conciliatory attitude to the Rhodesian regime. The political temperature remained at a low level until 1974 . . . this background may be of some importance in interpreting the actions of BP and Shell/BP personnel in that period . . . (p.77)

In other words, the heat, so far as London was concerned, was off. But the situation remained highly complex, because for two years the Britsh-owned subsidiary structure in Southern Africa had been breaking sanctions by the rather direct and obvious means of sending rail-tankers direct into Rhodesia from Portuguese Mozambique. Internationally, however, things were hotting up.

Because Wilson's euphoric diplomacy had quite failed to procure a settlement with Smith, international opinion was moving inexorably towards imposition of mandatory sanctions by the UN Having quite lost faith in their own make-believe sanctions, the British Government were agonised at the thought of mandatory sanctions, carrying renewed risk of economic confrontation with South Africa. It was, however, a proposition which could not be resisted without demolishing Britain's position in Black Africa, itself a factor of large and growing economic importance.

So far from being able quietly to drop sanctions, Britain now badly needed to reassert commitment, at least in form. It was not, however, difficult for the oilmen to perceive that provided Whitehall could be given the form, it was unlikely that substance would be required as well. This is what led to the February 1968 meeting between George Thomson, as Commonwealth Secretary, and Lord Strathalmond and Sir Frank McFadzean, representing BP and Shell. Thomson had just been assuring several African countries that no British company was supplying oil to Rhodesia: he was now informed that such was not the case.

However, the oilmen now produced the outline of their new wheeze, subsequently elaborated in discussions with officials of the Ministry of Power: the French Compagnie Francaise des Petroles would now take over direct supply to Rhodesia out of Mozambique, and would receive in exchange British oil at Durban, South Africa, with which to supply equivalent quantities to its South African clients.

Basic issue for inquiry

Notoriously, Lord Thomson and Sir Harold Wilson cannot agree on just how much of those remarkable discussions reached the relevant inner group of Cabinet – nor is it known just who was on it. (It is certainly true that Mr Callaghan had moved to the Home Office, and was not for the moment part of the inner group.) It is however easy to believe Lord Thomson when he says that the decision to avoid prosecuting the oil companies was not one that he would have taken alone.

At this point, any meaningful inquiry will have to confront a basic issue. It seems likely that the Cabinet Committee record can be read in several ways – and we learn from Crossman elsewhere that Cabinet records may be ambiguous or incomplete where embarrassing matter is concerned. But we also know that underneath every Ministerial committee-structure there is a structure of 'official' committees, in which issues are examined in far greater detail. It is inconceivable that the detailed account of the 'cosmetic' arrangements given to the Ministry of Power would not have been passed on to the Foreign Office via an official committee system, and indeed the BP submission suggests that such was the case (p.74). Only by breaking with the hallowed constitutional principle that all Civil Service advice remains anonymous – in other words, by calling on civil servants to give detailed accounts of themselves – will it be possible to discover whether the politicians have any justification in pleading ignorance.

If we believe the BP submission, the British Government left BP and Shell alone with their cosmetics after 1968. But the British Foreign Service, presumably with the aim of

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bolstering-up a Southern African policy which was now largely phoney, spent the next few years in a mind-bending orgy of hypocrisy. Leaving their own officially-known offenders inviolate, British officials now began to make themselves out the chief policemen to the UN Sanctions Committee. In the words of Ambassador Ivor Richard before the Security Council on 30 June 1977:

> The UK has tried honestly and hard to enforce sanctions, and we are not ashamed of our record . . . in prosecuting those traders under our jurisdiction . . . my own Government has brought to the attention of the Sanctions Committee over 200 cases of suspected violation involving many Member States.

In the same month Mr Callaghan himself told the Commonwealth Summit that

> there was no country in the world which had reported so many violations of sanctions as the United Kingdom had done. We had not been fully successful and we had undoubtedly made mistakes 'but let him who is without sin cast the first stone'. He asked them to believe in British sincerity.

Even these two efforts, however, pale beside a brief which the Foreign Office circulated to correspondents in 1977 and attributed the ineffectiveness of sanctions, among other things, to

> The condoning of sanctions-breaking by some of the major trading nations and some of Rhodesia's African neighbours.

Meanwhile, in response to a direct question from the UN Committee about British activities, the British Government replied (italics added):

> The competent United Kingdom authorities have studied the report most carefully, and have discussed its contents with the British oil companies . . . These authorities are satisfied that the report contains no evidence of sanctions-breaking by any British companies or individuals, and have accepted the assurances given by Shell and BP that *neither they nor any company in which they have an interest have engaged either directly or with others in supplying crude oil or oil products to Rhodesia.* This is the same position as that established in 1968, when Her Majesty's Government investigated similar charges at the highest level . . . (Tenth Report of the Sanctions Committee, 1977, p.304)

Bending law for powerful

Obviously, the people who wrote and authorised those words ought to be questioned publicly. Individually, they may well be honestly mistaken : institutionally, however, the words are nothing better than a lie. It should be equally obvious that it would be difficult for any system to become so corrupted unless its operations were conducted in deep secrecy, and unless its rules of action were remarkably manipulable. The system tempts a politician because it encourages him to hear only what he wants to hear, and makes it readily possible for him to pretend that the consequences of error can be buried in untruth. Yet the Labour leadership of Mr Callaghan, so far from admitting that there might be any need for reform, has moved steadily towards reinforcement of the status quo.

Mr Callaghan appeals to the world to believe in Britain's 'sincerity' about sanctions. It is optimistic to think they might do so. On the available record Mr Callaghan may be able to show he was not involved in the grubby details of the 1968 deal. But he was decisively concerned in the creation of the absurd policy which made such a deal inevitable, and it's not clear that a Prime Minister pledging the nation's honour can have recourse to legalistic defences.

But, forgetting the world, what are British voters to make of the 'sincerity' of their political executive? Most voters, to be sure, are not passionately concerned about Southern Africa. But the significance of the affair is that it strengthens a suspicion which has had plenty of other, less clear-cut cases to feed on: in this country, it seems, there is no way of preventing an elected government from practising an elaborate fraud upon the electorate. We are asked to tolerate a system in which people who are supposed to be responsible Ministers are in fact shuffled like packs of cards to produce any result the Prime Minister finds immediately convenient, and in which the Civil Service may be relied upon to produce elaborate fictions to disguise the consequences of opportunism. Worst of all, it is apparent that the law will be bent for the powerful, and practised in full rigour against anyone thought defenceless.

The circumstances of Shell, BP and their executives make a remarkable contrast to those of the defendants in the Old Bailey Official Secrets trial. The oilmen have been excused prosecution under a law which Britain has repeatedly promised, before the world, to enforce with rigour. The Old Bailey defendants are being prosecuted under a law which, with equal emphasis, the British Government has promised to leave unused. Cynicism is apt to spread rapidly in a community where such contrasts are visible.

Jeremy Paxman: How much longer can Sinn Fein stay legal?

Senior police and army officers in Ulster have spent the week pondering the implications of a case which has gone a long way to establishing the independence of the Northern Ireland courts. The decision by the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Robert Lowry, that the man alleged by the Crown to be Commander of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional IRA had 'no case to answer' on charges of IRA membership has thrown Roy Mason's current security strategy into confusion.

Mason and his advisers, convinced that the IRA is 'on the run', have spent the last year cracking down on its political wing. In November 1977 they began a series of raids on the homes and offices of prominent members of the Provisional Sinn Fein, the political – and legal – equivalent of the Provisional IRA. The biggest raids came after the appalling explosion at the La Mon restaurant earlier this year, when among those arrested was one Gerry Adams, a 29 year old former barman, and 'full time member of Sinn Fein's national executive'.

The raids have continued all year, in Derry, Lurgan, Armagh, Straban and Newry, but not particularly in Belfast. They appear to have been part of an attempt to disrupt Provisional Sinn Fein and IRA efforts to erect an alternative system of government in the Catholic ghettoes.

In addition the police set up a special squad to deal with cases involving journalists, who in the view of the Northern Ireland Office were acting as willing ciphers for Provisional propaganda. Both policies came to a head in the Adams case. During interrogation, Adams was shown a police video recording of a film on Republicanism I made last year. In a speech we filmed at the Annual Conference of Provisional Sinn Fein in Dublin, Adams used the words 'billet', 'war cone' and 'battle'. The Crown claimed that such language indicated Adams was speaking as a member of the IRA.

Three months later the Crown added a second piece of evidence: the testimony of an army officer who had seen Adams taking part in an 'IRA parade' in the Maze prison (Long Kesh) in April 1976. Such a charge could be brought against the vast majority of men who served their sentences or were interned in 'Special Category' compounds, where drill and parades are a weekly occurrence.

In court last week, Lowry ruled that both pieces of evidence were inconclusive. There was, he said, 'no logical reason for saying that those who took part in an Easter parade were members of the IRA', and 'fighting talk and military metaphor is the current coin'.

The decision appears to mean that no further charges of membership of the IRA can be brought on the basis of speeches advocating support for the Republican movement. It was, said Lowry, 'a trial for a political offence, but not a political trial'. Out of the fifty or so members of Sinn Fein to have been arrested in the last year, nine face charges of membership of the IRA. In the view of several policemen and lawyers, the ruling may mean that a man can only be found guilty of membership of the IRA if he admits to it himself. Nevertheless, Adams has been in custody for seven months, each application for bail successively turned down.

Sinn Fein was made a legal political party in May 1974, in the hope that legitimacy might encourage more emphasis on political rather than military activity. It has yet to put up a candidate in any election. But if they want to continue their present policy of raids upon Sinn Fein, the Northern Ireland Office must be considering changing the law, either by broadening the grounds of evidence (in the Irish Republic the statement of a police officer is all that is necessary to prove membership of the IRA), or by re-proscribing Sinn Fein, in which case membership of the political wing would become an offence in itself.

In the meantime, other cases involving journalists are working their way through the legal machine and other journalists may find themselves in court before Christmas. The effect that journalists appearing as subpoenaed Crown witnesses will have upon the Provisionals' openness to the media can only be guessed at. But to the men at Stormont it is a far more attractive tactic than any ham-fisted attempt to gag the press by government decree.

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Patrick Cockburn: Who will support the Shah?

'They're killing us! They're killing us!' shouted a young woman running from the massacre in East Tehran's Jelah Square last Friday which left several hundreds dead. As survivors from the crowd fled for protection into the narrow alleyways around the square there was disbelief that the army had opened up with concentrated automatic fire on a peaceful crowd, many unaware that martial law had been declared in the capital and eleven other cities earlier the same morning. Rumours spread rapidly through the city that the shootings had been carried out, not by the Iranian army, but by 300 Israeli paratroops imported for the occasion.

This is almost certainly wishful thinking on the part of the opposition. Encouraged by reports that some army units were wavering in their support for the Shah, there were hopes among the more optimistic that he might buckle to demands for radical reform without a stand-up fight. In the week before the massacre crowds totalling an estimated 300,000 had twice filled the streets of Tehran. In a city of four million people this is a sizeable chunk of the population. During the second march, in defiance of a government ban, the crowds had thrown flowers at army trucks and police riot vehicles. Chants of 'the army are our brothers' mingled with shouts of 'death to the Shah'. For a moment, despite all the billions of dollars lavished on Iran's military arsenal the Peacock Throne was looking embarrassingly short of defenders.

But such a peaceful conclusion to the Shah's autocracy was unlikely. The government could not take a chance on further fraternisation between soldiers and crowds. In any case the bulk of the officer corps, along with Savak, the secret police, are for the moment loyal to the Shah. Within two days of the massacre the new military governor of Tehran was setting up military tribunals and threatening to execute anybody 'acting against constitutional monarchy.' In the first three days of martial law alone Ali Amini, prime minster in the early 1960s, estimated 2,000 people had been killed.

The Jaleh square massacre, and the savagery with which martial law has been imposed, has exposed the absurdity of the government's claim that they are opposed only by religious obscurantists attacking the Shah's 'Great Civilisation' in the name of Islamic purity. Certainly Ayatollah Khomeini, exiled in Iraq since 1963, and other leaders of the Shi'a sect are the popular heroes whose names are chanted by the crowds. But since it was set up in 1957 Savak has ensured that no opposition political party could be organised nationally. Mosques became the safest refuge for dissidents. The National Front, set up as an opposition umbrella organisation, has established strong relations with the religious leaders over the last few months but its leadership is still amorphous and the extent of its support unknown.

At the same time the mullahs, the religious leaders, have been able to capitalise on the resentment against westernisation. The social and cultural dislocation brought by Iran's oil revenue of just over $20 billion a year has provoked a religious reaction in the universities as well as the bazaars. At its crudest this shows itself in stories of American helicopter pilots driving motorcycles into mosques in Isfahan. But there is also resentment against the high wages paid to foreign experts and workers.

The reaction against westernisation has been growing since the 1973 oil price increase but the final explosion was provoked by the government itself. Opposition meetings of students and others last year were attacked by Savak agents and army officers in civilian dress using clubs and bicycle chains. This sort of thing had happened before but in January the police killed a rumoured 70 demonstrators – the official death toll was six – in the holy city of Qom. Riots spread to other cities such as Tabriz, Yazd, Mashad, Isfahan and Tehran. Every forty days mourning ceremonies brought crowds back onto the streets and the police provided a new supply of martyrs. The shopkeepers, porters and artisans of the bazaars – Iranian bazaars are central to the country's retail and wholesale trade, accounting for two-fifths of the total – started a series of strikes and demonstrations.

In reply the Shah grudgingly announced a series of limited reforms, culminating in August with a promise of elections next June. There was a shake-up at the top of Savak which is believed to have 100,000 part-time informers as well as 20,000 full time operatives. In June the head of Savak, Nemotoelah Nassiri, was replaced by general Nasser Noghadem. Since Noghadem is believed to have been the guiding hand behind Savak since the early 1960s, the change is largely cosmetic.

Other gestures were more significant but came too little, too late. The Shah went as far as to say that Savak had become 'a state within a state'. Earlier this year even Lord Chalfont could 'not deny that in Iran the rights of individual human beings, in the sense in which we cherish them in Western democracies, are sometimes trampled underfoot.' This is a start but hardly conveys the feelings of Iranians who for ten years have acted on the assumption that every office has its Savak informer.

The Shah has also been motivated by a strong desire to be respectable. His dreams of a 'Great Civilisation' presided over by a beneficient and popular monarch are in ruins. Viewed from his palace in the foothills of the Albors mountains, Iran must look as if it has returned to the days of Mossadeq and the nationalist revolt of the early 1950s. The massacre last week washed away the cosmetics of the last decade.

In 1971, for instance, some $400 million were spent celebrating 1,500 years of Persian monarchy. A tent city was built at vast expense beside the ruins of ancient Persepolis. Prince Philip came but it was not quite the occasion for which the Shah was hoping. Pompidou sent his apologies and he had to make do with Spiro Agnew instead of Nixon. Only after the 1973/4 oil price rises did the Shah feel he was receiving the attention that a world leader deserved.

For the mass of Iranians the oil boom brought benefits but it has also brought massive economic and social dislocation. Since 1963 the proportion of Iranians living in the countryside has dropped from three-quarters to half of the 34 million population and now only about a third of the labour force is in agriculture. As food imports have grown in the last four years, rice crops have sometimes been left to rot by the shores of the Caspian. The peasants who normally harvested them had left for the cities.

But the benefits for the ordinary Iranian were never as great as expectations and certainly nothing like the grandiloquent promises made. Last year inflation was over 30 per cent and despite a more austere approach this year it is still between 15 and 20 per cent. The housing shortage has meant some families paying as much as half their earnings in rent.

Resentment at the failure of the 'great civilisation' to provide the benefits promised was exacerbated by the conspicuous consumption of the new rich in Tehran. For instance Habib Sabet, once a bicycle mechanic, spent $14 million building a replica of the Petit Trianon in Tehran. Admiral Ramzi Attai reputedly spent $5 million on a ring for his wife, before being jailed for corruption. Sporadic drives against corruption tended to stop well short of the imperial court.

Resentment was also felt, as the government attempted to curb inflation by more austere policies, at the extraordinary expenditure on armaments. By the middle of the 1980s Iran will have a new navy, an airforce equipped with the same aircraft as the great powers and 2,300 main battle tanks – mostly redesigned British Chieftains. In total Britain will have supplied arms worth about £5 billion.

But at the moment it is less the precise strength of the Chieftains' Chobham armour than the loyalty of the drivers which is worrying the Shah. The army has been cosseted with its own housing, high rates of pay and good conditions. No senior officers are appointed without the Shah's approval. This means that power within the army has flowed down to colonels, majors and captains as the senior officers are moved rapidly between commands.

It is on these middle-rank officers that the Shah's future now largely depends. Up to two months ago, the US State Department, presumably as well informed as any, was fairly sure that the army as a whole would remain loyal. For all the reports of soldiers shooting their officers the real state of feeling within the army is now unknown. Though politically isolated the Shah can cling on for now by relying on army firepower, but with the Jaleh Square massacre he has lost any chance of compromise with the opposition.

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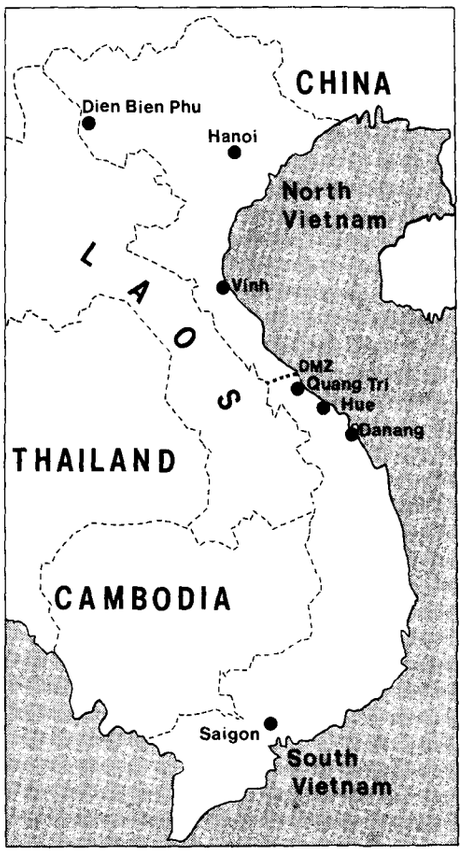
Vietnam: Do not weep for those just born

John Pilger revisits the country whose war he reported for ten years

My last glimpse of the Vietnam I knew so well, for so long was from the deck of an American aircraft carrier in the South China Sea. It was a blazing tropical dusk of which the now-we-say-farewell travelogues used to be made; and the scene on the USS *Blue Ridge* which had received those of us who had chosen to exit gracelessly by helicopter in the last hours of the last day, said much about the longest war game of the twentieth century. Sailors, marines and pilots lounged; reporters moped, like homeward bound conventioneers; the poodle belonging to and much beloved by the last American ambassador to Vietnam, Graham Martin, took its evening walk among the F-5 fighters and the Jolly Green Giant gunships, accompanied by the ambassador's Vietnamese manservant, who also hovered with a plastic trowel; the last CIA station chief in Saigon, Thomas Polgar, who had managed to struggle on board with an illicit cache of Scotch, stared Buddha-like at the horizon. (It was Polgar who, in defiance of Graham Martin, had ordered the giant tamarind tree in the embassy grounds to be chopped down so that the Jolly Green Giants could land and complete the evacuation. Martin, an ailing recluse with symptoms of martyrdom, had proclaimed, 'Once that great tree falls, and they see that we are running for our lives, all American prestige will fall with it.') And round and round the vast deck jogged a platoon of playful marines, spurting at each exhortation from their sergeant for 'a big dirty dozen, you guys!' The marines jogged past the ship's rock band, which was tuning up for that evening's end-of-term celebrations, past the portable barbecue sets on to which chefs were hoisting slabs of prime cut steak; crates of Coke and Diet Cola had already arrived – but, alas, no booze: American naval ships are 'dry' and this fact was bemoaned over the PA by the Admiral himself, a jovial, obese man in a cap who looked and spoke like the late Andy Devine. 'Well folks', said he, 'that just about wraps up Vietnam. So let's all have a party and get outta here, so we can mosey on back to Subic Bay and get ourselves a genuine Budweiser beer!'

The admiral's voice, the joggers' heavings, the band's inanities and the clatter of the feast preparations all but drowned a persistent knocking at our stern, as though someone was trying to bring us all to order. 'Damned if it ain't *them*!' said a marine major, peering over the side, 'damned if it ain't the gooks.' About fifty Vietnamese huddled below us in a listing, ruined landing craft; they were mostly families and at least a third of them were children. They were part of a flotilla of small boats that had come after us, having been told for a generation to fear for their lives under the communists. For most of that day, in the great heat, an old man had swung a boathook laced up with pots and pans against the



carrier's side, while another attempted to heave a length of rope up on to the deck; it barely reached and, anyway, there was no one to catch it; the few times it appeared, the joggers jogged over it. As the first was devoured and the dreadful band struck up, the *Blue Ridge* shuddered and moved forward, leaving the exhausted faces still pleading to be taken on board. A box of Diet Cola was thrown down to them, but it missed and sank. They had been given, we were assured, five days' supply of fresh water and a map; that their wretched craft was already sinking and they would go nowhere, except down, was acknowledged; but still we steamed away. A few hours earlier a few of us had watched as the bodies of two infants were lowered into the sea; and in one last, disconsolate gesture, which is embedded in my memory, a woman stood up and held out her baby as if to say, 'At least take him!'; then she slipped and they both fell into the sea. I and other reporters wrote about that small finale, but it was published in only a few American papers. By the time we reached the Philippines and telex machines and got ourselves a genuine Budweiser beer, Vietnam was indeed 'just about wrapped up'. The world's first media war had simply run out of ratings, and little has been heard from there in the intervening three and a half years. This summer I went back, and some impressions follow. The above preface is, I believe, a necessary reminder of how the game was played.

CLOSE BY THE RUNWAY at Hanoi airport, the words *'Dai Thang'* are emblazoned on a hoarding raised on the rim of a bomb crater so large it has been improved with steps and in a field where twisted, moss-overgrown metal, the remains of a pulverised train, protrudes almost as sculpture. *Dai Thang* means 'Great Victory' and some people here still proffer a greeting that entered the language on April 30, 1975 – 'Welcome to the Great Victory', although this is much less popular now as the realities of the war's aftermath chasten the memory of that heady day when the people of Hanoi filled the streets, at first in silence, incredulous at the brief announcement that their thirty-year war was over. Indeed, the Homeric hoardings are the only sign that this is 'the nation that beat the giant' and arriving here is almost like stumbling on the appendage to some great and unrecorded disaster. For all the media saturation of the war in the south only half the war and half the story were reported; I, for one, never imagined what was happening here.

Much of North Vietnam is a moonscape from which visible signs of life – houses, factories, schools, hospitals, pagodas, churches – have been obliterated. In some forests there are no longer birds and animals; and there are lorry drivers who will not respond to the hooting of a horn because they are deaf from the incessant sound of bombs; according to the Vice Minister of Health, more than 30,000 children in Hanoi and Haiphong suffered permanent deafness during the twelve nights of bombing at Christmas 1972. In Hanoi's Bach Mai Hospital, doctors have discovered that Napalm 'B', an amalgam of benzine, polystyrene and gasoline, which the Dow Chemical Company created especially for Vietnam, continues to smoulder under the skin's tissues through the lifetime of its victims. Perhaps more evidence that this was a war of rampant technology against people is hardly needed; but it is here, in the north, in its unexpurgated form, along with the truth that the war was 'won', if that word applies at all, not by Oriental Prussians under the spell of an ideology – North Vietnam was never like China; the Vietnamese by nature are sceptics and often cranky individualists – but by a peasant people who developed their ingenuity and patience to the extreme human limits and were united in their sense of community and history. It is this extraordinary presence of history, during which they have repelled the Chinese, the Mongols, the Siamese, the Japanese, the French and the Americans, that now dominates the ironic and seemingly baffling shuffles in present Vietnamese foreign policy – but more about that later. One of the most moving stories I was told about then came from a

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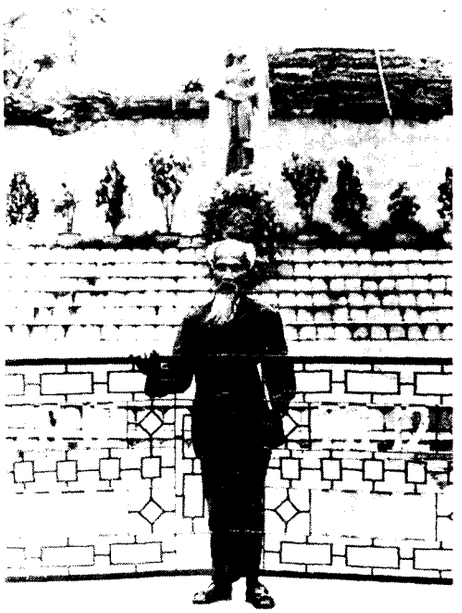
Frenchman who was in Hanoi during the 1972 bombing. 'I took shelter in the museum', he said, 'and there, working by candlelight with the B52s overhead, were young men and women earnestly trying to copy as many bronzes and sculptures as they could. They told me, "Even if the originals are destroyed, *something* will remain and our roots will be protected".' In Hanoi Zoo, the wreckage of twenty-three B52s shot down during Christmas 1972 is kept in a cage under a conventional zoological sign showing a map of the United States and the words 'Great Ferocious Beast'. Children peering through the bars at it chorus 'Beefeetytoo!' and make a mock growling noise. Nothing, not even the power of irony, is wasted here.

But all this appears unreal because Hanoi today is no more than a gentle, monkish Asian backwater of controlled poverty.



The man who stands in Kham Thiem Street: the other 283 died

There are no beggars, but if you throw away the stick of your ice lolly it is likely that a hovering person will retrieve it and wash it and press it into some other service: *that* is how they survived. Thirty years of war have exterminated private cars and taxis; this is a city silent with the bicycle, one of which is mounted in a hollowed corner of the museum; on it, a man and 300 kilos of supplies peddled distances of up to 500 miles in order to win that other 'great victory', at Dien Bien Phu. Most of Hanoi's people still live in narrow streets laid out as in the Middle Ages on a craft basis: streets of workers in ivory, brass and leather, streets of tinsmiths, streets of coffin-makers. These streets, not the spacious French-built centre, were the B52's main target and 'carpets' of bombs were laid down them with sustained accuracy. In Kham Thiem Street, at ten o'clock on Boxing Night 1972, a bomb hit every third house; and every day since an old nicotine-stained figure has kept a vigil at one of these gaps, in a state of enduring wonder at his own survival. His name is Hoang Van Dung and he alone lived where 283 died. 'It was a block of flats', he said, 'we were mostly the old, women and children. There was no time to reach the shelters, and we sang as the bombs came down.'

Route One, going south to Saigon and branching west to the Ho Chi Minh Trail (to which foreign tour parties are planned), is the 'Street of No Joy': a nickname shared, with equal good reason, by the people who depended on its convoys and the American pilots who blitzed it. There were no SAM missiles here, just militia of local people who would put up a curtain of small arms fire as the F105s and the Phantoms came in at 200 feet; and when the planes had gone, small groups of mostly women and children would swim the pontoons into place to allow the trucks through, then dismantle them before dawn and hide them in the paddies. Today, most villages have their own museum of US Air Force scrap: a pilot's helmet, a boot, a Batman comic. At Dong Loc, which was bombed back to the Stone Age and beyond, leaving craters that have merged into a swamp, are the graves of the entire anti-aircraft militia, all young women . . . Vo Thi Than, aged 22, Duong Thi Tan, aged 19. A place called Ham Long ought to be as famous as Dresden, because it was bombed more than Dresden: every day for four years, from five in the morning till two in the afternoon. It is overlooked by a mangy hill on which, inexplicably, anti-aircraft gunners are still dug in. 'Maybe', said my guide, 'they don't believe it is *really* over'.

THROUGH ALL THIS, life proceeded in astonishing ways. What now appear as archaeological digs were underground hospitals: wards, operating theatres, baby delivery rooms. Every village in North Vietnam has its own *crèche*, and as the planes swept in from the sea the infants were lowered on a cord and pulley device four at a time, each in separate padded baskets, into deep shelters just below their cribs; and in every classroom, beside every desk, was a trap door so that within seconds a class of fifty children would literally disappear. In this way, casualties outside the towns were kept low. However, in Vinh, a large mining community, the layer upon layer of bombing penetrated underground and today not even the foundations of buildings remain. Vinh is flanked by a saddle of hills and evokes the haunting photograph of Hiroshima taken on the first anniversary of the atomic bombing. People here, living under straw, are today on the edge of famine; a Cuban agronomist I met told me that, because of two crop failures and the sudden union of two alien economics that had thrown distribution into chaos, people living in devastated areas, such as Vinh, were being rationed to just six pounds of rice per *month*. 'That is considerably less than Bangladesh', he reminded me. On the day I was in Vinh, a long military convoy rumbled through the streets of straw. The soldiers in the lorries were conscripted teenagers and I learned later that they were going to the war on the border with Cambodia; they represent Vietnam's third consecutive generation at war. And as I proceeded south, I learned that American-made F-5 and A-37 planes were flying regular missions over Cambodia, mostly from Bien Hoa base, and dropping 250-pound bombs and anti-personnel 'cluster' bombs which discharge thou-

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sands of small needles and, like Napalm, were developed by the Americans especially for their war in Vietnam. At the same time, Vietnamese ground commanders are using American-made helicopters to collect the wounded and they are placing military significance on a 'body count' of enemy dead. None of this is a re-enactment for Hollywood cameras; not only are the Vietnamese using American equipment, they have also adopted American tactics and jargon: 'air-strikes', 'gunships', 'body count', etc. The conflict with Cambodia, or Democratic Kampuchea as it is now known, has much to do with who controls the disputed rice-lands of the 'Parrots Beak' and with regional animosities that have simmered for thousands of years. With their air strikes and gunships and body counts, the Vietnamese are trying to overthrow the present regime in Phnom Penh and to replace it with one less inclined toward China and more malleable to Vietnam's wishes. Names and places are different, and roles are reversed; but have we not read all this before?

The old South Vietnam begins at Quang Tri, on the seventeenth parallel, where Vietnam was divided into two 'national regrouping areas' by the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina. The hills here, with scabrous crowns that once were fire bases, look like miniature extinct volcanoes; and, as with so many places in the south I knew well during the war, the realisation that I had been here before was slow in coming. Apart from one shell-pocked shrine, there is nothing to indicate that for five years thousands of US Marines were dug into these hills, utterly isolated in warrens of mud and dust, often lying painfully on their sides and often in their own shit and blood, under orders not to advance an inch forward but to 'sustain' the artillery, mortar fire and rockets that pummelled them day and night. This was the Demilitarised Zone, the DMZ; when I came here in 1967 the rotors of the helicopter that brought me were blown away, causing me to spend four days instead of the few hours I had planned. They were all volunteers, of whom the majority were poor whites weaned on John Wayne, and blacks in retreat from the ghetto. Their frustration was intolerable; they were here not as soldiers but as targets, to be hit and maimed and killed. On the helicopter that lifted me out were three dead and two dying, one of whom said, 'Hey man, my mom thinks Vietnam is somewhere near Panama, real close and threatening, y'know?' Surely men have not often demonstrated such raw bravery in the cause of nothing. And today there is not a single grave here: not a helmet or a boot.

The 'graves' begin a few miles beyond these hills. Not American graves; there are none in Vietnam. Nor even graves with human remains. At the end of the war, the men in Hanoi gave priority to a cosmetics operation that perhaps has no parallel anywhere, in its intent and scope. Throughout South Vietnam – where, in the last years of the war, whole armoured divisions of the North Vietnamese Army usurped the role of the southern National Liberation Front (the Vietcong) and engaged in set-piece battles – there are now hundreds of military cemeteries that did not exist three and a half years ago. These cemeteries are phoney. They were prefabricated in the north and transported to those battlefields on which the North Vietnamese fought and lost many. Each new headstone has the name of the soldier purported to be resting beneath it; he is not. The North Vietnamese Army was meticulous about gathering up its dead, and had units trained especially for the job, so that the *Bo Dai* ('soldiers of liberation') could be buried with honours in the north. The cemeteries in the south are both symbols of grief and defiance; one of them has been raised on a bulldozed American base, whose ashes – tyres, shell casings, a Coke machine, a volleyball net – have been swept ignominiously into one neat tip.

AT HUE, the old imperial capital for which the North Vietnamese and the Americans mauled each other and the civilian population for thirty six days and nights during *Tet* in 1968, my guide, a melancholic man called Do Tuan That, refused to walk with me through the citadel. He said he would cross the moat but not enter the garden. As a young lieutenant in the NVA, he had been here through the most intense holocaust of the war and he clearly regarded his survival as a miracle; he is today terribly scarred and infested with shrapnel, and it was not difficult to understand his reluctance. The citadel is today as though a swarm of especially virulent locusts descended on it and savaged every tree; even the ancient walls appear to have been 'eaten'. One landscaped terrace, where the first line of NVA troops was dug in, has resisted all attempts to implant it, and is now considered to be poisoned for the foreseeable future.

Directly opposite, across the Perfume River, is a hotel built in 1962 for the first American advisers to the Diem regime. Beneath a plastic chandelier there is a long padded bar, now frequented by a few *cadré* but mostly by Russians, East Germans and Cubans who, with splendid and unwitting irony, use virtually the same vocabulary of derision to describe their hosts as the Americans used before them. One particular Russian, a senior technocrat, even looked like one of his American predecessors: crew cut, tailored safari suit, patent shoes, fine Samsonite attache case. He did not use the word 'gooks' but the message of his sentiments was clear. 'These people', he said, 'infuriate me; they are lazy, dirty, incompetent, ungrateful and they will not listen when you tell them how to manage themselves. And the controls! They have people spying on us everywhere, telling us how to do this, do that. I am despairing of them. Look at my position; I am here to help them, but they are full of suspicion; they restrict my movements. I am fed up with them . . . aaah!' A Cuban seated beside him approved of this diatribe. 'They're impossible', he said, 'they won't be told *anything*.'

I bumped into this pair in Danang and Saigon and each time their griping rose to a new crescendo. I also met several East Germans, who although less vocal in their complaining, confirmed the restrictions placed on them as advisers. All this was most interesting, because it strongly suggested that the basic lesson of Vietnam's long struggle is still to be learnt by her allies as it was learnt painfully by her adversaries: that the Vietnamese passion for independence, coupled with a fear of subjugation by war or by aid-with-strings, transcends so-called fraternalism.

TODAY, THE MAIN thrust of Vietnamese foreign policy is to make friends with the United States and with member countries of the Western-leaning ASEAN alliance. The secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Xuan Thuy, recently startled Washington by offering unconditional commercial and diplomatic ties with America and said that Vietnam no longer would insist on American reconstruction aid and reparations. This was repeated last month to a visiting group of American Congressmen in increasingly desperate tones. The Vietnamese not only want American technology and capital investment (while I was in Hanoi, a fraternal delegation from East Germany was moved out of the best hotel to make room for a fraternal delegation from the Chase Manhattan Bank) but, above all, they want to extricate Vietnam from the cold war between Moscow and Peking. The Vietnamese say that there are some 10,000 Chinese bolstering the Cambodian war effort and, as that war intensifies, the belief is growing in Hanoi that the Chinese will mount a limited invasion from either of its two military regions that border Vietnam and where there are as many divisions as there are in the entire Vietnamese army. This might be averted, runs their reasoning, if Vietnamese diplomats are ensconced in Washington and can persuade the Americans to exercise their now considerable influence on the Chinese.

Readers might wish to pause here to consider the kaleidoscope of ironies in all this. Why did John Foster Dulles, in sabotaging the Geneva Conference in 1954, prevent the establishment of a United Vietnam all those wasted years ago? To contain Chinese communism, of course! For those like myself, who do not play chess, keeping up with the game of nations in the Seventies has its difficulties; but what all this comes down to, it seems clear, is that if America had left Indochina alone, Vietnam would have evolved quickly into what it is now attempting to become: an Asian Yugoslavia, fiercely independent and on reasonable, self-interested terms with its region and with most of the world. That the American war merely delayed this process, and in the meantime caused the death and maiming of several million people and the technological vandalism of a nation and its land, not to mention the current enslavement of the Khymer people, is for sure the saddest truth of my time.

Danang, where the Marines stormed ashore Hollywood-style in 1965 and which became a pen of dislocated humanity fleeing from General Westmoreland's 'free fire zones', as well as the greatest whorehouse in Asia, displays its bitterness more than Saigon. 'Fuck you!' and 'You number ten, pig!' wafted at me over lattice walls. From here, Combined Action Company units – better known as WHAM boys – went west into the highlands and set up strategic camps and, with their WHAM handbooks to guide them

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What the Americans left behind: Tanks, and children – many with American serviceman fathers – in a Saigon orphanage

(P82: 'Never pat a Vietnamese on the head'), distributed everything from chocolate bars to electric flush lavatories. WHAM stood for winning hearts and minds and its missionaries were usually combat-weary marines, survivors of the DMZ; inevitably, much of their largesse found its way to the Vietcong. WHAM country is now a New Economic Zone, where soldiers, politicians, civil servants and hucksters of the old regime are employed in the paddies and in clearing land. Many are called 'volunteers'; in practice, this means that 'non-producers', such as bankrupt small businessmen who have no choice but to plead poverty to the authorities, are directed to lorries that leave for the countryside before sunrise every morning. In one new 'co-operative' – only a few miles from where, eleven years before, I spent a week with Sergeant Melvin Murrell's WHAM unit and watched incredulous peasants receive packets of Uncle Ben's miracle processed rice, comics and 5,000 toothbrushes – there are several hundred former Saigon soldiers pressed into a harsh rural existence, for which nothing in their life has prepared them.

So much for WHAM; so much for *his* 'liberation'. And consider this mighty irony: the Vietnamese Government has applied to the World Bank for a loan. The World Bank is headed by Robert McNamara the former hawkish Defence Secretary under Lyndon Johnson, from whom came the inspiration for an electrified fence around South Vietnam that would 'sanitise the nation against the disease of communism.' The World Bank is almost certain to help Vietnam, at least partly because MacNamara is reportedly impressed with the concept of the New Economic Zones as 'essential to the economic recovery of a proud nation'.

These zones and the 're-education' programme are entwined. It is difficult to know with certainty who is sent off to the countryside to be re-educated, how long they must spend there and if they return. Few high-ranking military officers have returned. One young woman I met told me that her father, an army surgeon, had been taken away a few days after the fall of Saigon and the family had received no news of him; even their repeated requests for confirmation that he is alive have been refused. However, her brother-in-law, an architect, returned after two years of re-education, leaner but otherwise well, and was immediately allowed to practise his profession. He had played the re-education game skilfully by not complaining and by feigning 'confessions' of past political allegiances, and after a while the family was permitted to write a letter to him every two months. They were given a number and a postcode and in their letters they always included effusive words of praise for Uncle Ho's wisdoms – which they hoped would speed his release.

He described a rigorous ten-hour day clearing land near the border with Cambodia. His food was frugal: a mush of rice and animal fodder; and he slept in barracks he had helped to build. There was little brutality, but suicides among the oldest were not uncommon, and there was much suffering from untreated dysentry and malaria. The rationale behind the zones is only partly political and punitive. The government has said that some ten million people are to be moved over the next twenty years from the cities to the underpopulated mountainous areas in the north and west, facing the two current enemies: Cambodia and China.

Another reason is the critical food situation. The beginnings of famine I saw in Vinh, in the north, are no aberration. Vietnam's area of cultivation has remained exactly what it was under King Hung 4000 years ago; but in the meantime the population has leapt to 50 million, to which a million and a half mouths are added each year. During the war years, North Vietnam subsisted like a Trappist practising self-dienial while South Vietnam, the former rice bowl, sustained an exodus to the cities and was fed intravenously by the Americans, who pulled out the tubes when they flew away. Food, or the lack of it, is obsessively discussed; at one neighbourhood re-education session there were muffled complaints about the bureaucracy's poor record of distribution. 'You should not complain,' said a humourless *cadre*, 'it's better than before when the Americans ate the flesh of your babies!' At this, an old woman leapt to her feet and shouted, 'Rubbish! We all know the Americans only eat out of cans!' The audience burst into laughter and cheering, relishing the moment of rebellion. Re-educating millions of like-minded heretics will not be easy.

THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM, Northerners are firmly in control at all but the lowest level of administration: the neighbourhood committee, or *To;* whose chief apparatchik is seldom a veteran of NLF. Whenever I put the question, 'What has happened to the Vietcong?' the response invariably would be: 'They are in positions of responsibility,' or, less obliquely, 'A great many died in the liberation struggle'. The latter, of course, is true; by the end of the direct American involvement, the Americans, with their massive firepower, had indeed achieved their aim of a high 'kill ratio', especially in the Mekong Delta. In Saigon, I attended an 'evening of culture' in the former National Assembly, which the French built as an opera house; the tableaux of song and dance had the repetitive theme of liberation fighters entering Saigon to an ecstatic welcome by the people – which, of course, did not happen. In the intermission, a young man hovering close to me whispered, 'Do you like our revolutionary theatre?' 'Yes,' I responded, dutifully. 'Well, mister, I hope you enjoy it; these actors are all you'll see of the VC!'

The VC I met are now tourist guides. One of them, a Mr Dung, conducted me around the former presidential palace where Thieu cowered in his bunker until he wisely sought the political calm of Wimbledon, where he lives today. Mr. Dung invited me to sit in Thieu's grandiose throne and was amused when I told him that the last time I was in the palace was to report a ceremony in which Spiro Agnew, then Vice-President of

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the United States, presented Thieu with a gift-wrapped filing cabinet '. . . as a token of the esteem of the American people'. The throne, inlaid with gold and ivory, is behind a large desk and raised on a platform so that, in the immortal words of Graham Martin, the last American pro-consul, 'whenever the little bastard received us we didn't have to pat him on the head'.

I was taken to see a place I had heard many rumours about during the war, including one that it did not exist: the Vietcong's 'central staging point' at Cu Chi, fifty miles from Saigon. It existed all right: it is a remarkable network of tunnels, 200 miles of them, through which whole regiments slid like snakes during daytime, emerging at night to re-supply and to ambush. The Americans were never able to find or destroy the main tunnels, even though the tunnels were situated less than a Sunday drive from the great jukebox that was the US command complex in Saigon, where a procession of air-conditioned generals saw the fabled light at the end of their own metaphoric tunnels. 'Operation Hades' was conceived in the late Sixties to root out the subterranean enemy,

Ex-Vietcong Minh No 4 shows off part of his 200 mile network of tunnels

and tracts of forest were defoliated and crops were poisoned in the process. After an American Academy of Sciences team came to Vietnam and discovered that the aerial spraying of herbicides, long banned in the United States, was also producing deformed babies, the name was changed to the more friendly and acceptable 'Operation Ranch Hand'.

The main entrance to the tunnels is a large trapdoor ringed by petrified trees, beyond which shimmers an horizon laid completely to waste 'for maybe half a century or more', according to one Academy member's report to Congress. (The Vietnamese estimate that 44 per cent of the country's forests have been similarly destroyed.) When five of us arrived at Cu Chi, a bizarre and touching little scene awaited us; against this nuclear horizon, within sight of a bomb crater, a wrecked American tank, a shallow grave and a crippled child drawing water with a Napalm canister, a lunch table was being laid. The tablecloth was white linen, silver cutlery was wrapped in pink napkins, beer stood in ice buckets and cold towels were dispensed with deference by a waiter who also saw off the flies and mosquitoes.

A nugget of man with two red stars on his collar greeted us. 'My name is Minh Number Four!' he said 'I am the leader here. We want you to enjoy your visit. We are proud of Cu Chi.' Minth Number Four – that's his military codename – came down from the north in 1961 and he and his men lived and fought literally in darkness for a decade; indeed, his eyes are still those of a hypogeal creature recently released into the light. Today, the tunnels are inhabited by insect mutations, created by the herbicides; crouched in a shaft less than three feet high, Minh said, 'During daylight the Americans would be directly above. To shoot them we often had to trip them up first, to get the right aim. We killed them one by one.' How did he regard the Americans now? 'I feel sorry for them,' he replied. 'They underestimated our abilities very badly; they thought we were children who could be brushed aside in a year or two.'

SAIGON REMAINS IN SHOCK. The greatest consumer society in the world that produced nothing (except an estimated 1800 dollar millionaires) is like an old whore with a hangover; and not all the girls with the steel skin and the ladled mascara and the tight white pants are off being re-educated; some of them have been kept on for the services of the *Bo Dai*, though at much reduced rates. A Saigon without beggars and junkies and 'dust of life' urchins and double amputee veterans coming at you like crabs with a sawn off Coke can, is now a pleasant city which manages to mask its tensions and frustrations.

A villa that was the CIA's Saigon headquarters has been converted to the world's first Disneyland of carnage; and at the end of your tour you are given tea to relieve the nausea brought on by the unrelenting horror of the displays. Every devilish thing that was dropped on them is here including a bomb that sucked the oxygen from the air, killed people and left buildings intact: a miniature neutron bomb no less. There is a weed developed by American scientists to prevent anything else from growing. There is a CIA relief map of Saigon's brothels that lights up. There is a reconstruction of the 'tiger cages' of Con Son Island and a beautiful, crippled young woman called Tao, who will tell you how cold water was thrown into her cage during winter and quick-lime in summer. 'You don't imagine', she said, 'when I hear the war is over, my mind flies.' When Tran Van Tuyen heard the war was over, did his mind fly, too? He was chairman of the National Assembly and one of the most tenacious democrats I ever knew. A radical lawyer of the 'third force', he poured his limitless compassion into helping Thieu's political prisoners until, he, too, was imprisoned in the tiger cages and was tortured, which once included burial to his neck in sewage. He is now said to be officially classified as 'obstinate' and has been despatched to some miserable place for re-education.

One wall of photographs in this 'war crimes museum' is devoted to 'Operation Babylift', that squalid episode shortly before the end of the war when hundreds of waifs, many of them not orphans, were bundled out of Saigon in the cause of newspaper circulation, dubious charitable motives and the fraudulent image of Richard Nixon's successor. Those who will recall the assault of their emotions, particularly when 150 babies died in the crash of an American 'mercy

Tao, paralysed in the Tiger Cages, now a guide in Saigon

plane', will be pleased to learn that the orphans and handicapped children left behind are being well cared for – and with a sensitivity that covers equally the small nation fathered by Americans. These children are given a compassionate unembellished story of their origins: they are told that their fathers were foreign soldiers who had to go home; there is no mention of war crimes or 'imperialist aggressors'; and if their mother can be found and she has an address in America, as sometimes happens, they are encouraged to write to their fathers. They are even taught some 'American culture', and Donald Duck shares the wall above their beds with Uncle Ho. The generosity and total absence of rancour embodied in the official approach to bringing up these children of the former enemy is the other side to a regime that indulges its Stalinism in the intellectual barbarities of 're-education'. At the Young Flower orphanage in Saigon I asked the name of a black curly-headed jumping ball with big Chicago eyes. 'My name is Tran,' he said. 'I am nine.' I asked him, 'What are the words of the song you have just sung?' He looked gravely at the floor, as kids do, and his words left the interpreter shaking her head. She repeated slowly: 'The war is gone . . . planes come no more . . . do not weep for those just born . . . the human being is evergreen.'

Photos by Eric Piper

A napalm shell becomes a bucket in the hands of a Vietcong leader

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Reuben Ainsztein: What Holocaust left unsaid

The press has reported that after watching the 'Holocaust' Mrs Fanny Gedall, an 81-year-old Jewess of St Annes in Lancashire, told her son that the film was horrible and killed herself by taking a large overdose of sleeping pills. The makers of the series may quote this latest victim of the Final Solution as another proof of the power of their soap opera. I would not accept their claim. Had their soap opera been truly effective, it should have driven to suicide not only Jews. In this country there are still alive many politicians and civil servants who were responsible for the Struma tragedy; for deciding together with Herbert Morrison that 3500 Jewish babies and children from France could not be saved from the ovens of Auschwitz in 1943 by giving them asylum in Britain because their arrival in this country would allegedly cause an outburst of populist anti-semitism; and for generally framing and pursuing the policy of the wartime British Government that blocked all attempts at mass rescue of those Jews who could still be saved from the workings of the Final Solution. Had 'Holocaust' been more than a soap opera, one of those people should by now have taken an overdose.

Elie Wiesel, the American-Jewish writer of Hungarian origin who survived Auschwitz while 400,000 Hungarian Jews were gassed or burned alive there during the four months of spring and summer of 1944, said in an article published by *The New York Times* on 16 April this year that he found the serial 'Untrue, offensive, cheap . . . It transforms an ontological event into soap-opera . . . Contrived situations, sentimental episodes, implausible coincidences: The witness feels here duty-bound to declare: What you have seen on the screen is not what happened *there*. You may think you know now how the victims lived and died, but you do not . . .'

Gerald Green the author of 'Holocaust' has rewritten the Final Solution so thoroughly that Erik Dorf, an unemployed lawyer with a pushing wife, and not Hitler, Himmler or even Heydrich is presented in the soap opera as being responsible for most of the ideas behind the Final Solution. To give their soap opera an air of authenticity, the producer hired an ex-SS officer to advise on SS uniforms, but forgot to consult Jewish survivors or even a Jewish rabbi, so that even the scenes of Jews praying are not correct: Jews do not wear prayer shawls for their night prayers and the rabbi performing the completely implausible wedding ceremony in the Ukrainian forests pronounces the wrong blessing.

One need not be a historian to be outraged by the crass ignorance and contempt for the most basic truths displayed by the makers of 'Holocaust'. We see Dr Weiss, the head of the Weiss family, deported during the *Kristallnacht* pogrom to Poland and crossing without any difficulty into his Polish homeland. Yet the likelihood of Dr Weiss being allowed by the Poles to enter Poland, let alone practise medicine in Warsaw, were very small indeed. On 29 September 1938 Daladier and Chamberlain sold out Czechoslovakia to Hitler in Munich. On 6 October the Polish Government, which had played the part of a hyena to Hitler's tiger in the destruction of Czechoslovakia, issued a decree virtually depriving the 50,000 Polish Jews in Germany and Austria of their Polish nationality. On 28 October Heydrich, annoyed by the Polish attempt to make the Germans solve the 'Jewish Problem' for them, served deportation orders on 15,000 Polish Jews and a few days later 10,000 were dumped in the no-man's-land between the German border station and the Polish border station of Zbaszyn because the Poles refused to admit the Jews.

To write the story of the Weiss family against the true historical background would have been commercially suicidal, especially as such a truthful story would have had to tell also about Jews who understood the menace of Nazism better than anybody else and fought against it whenever and wherever there was the slightest opening. Most of those Jews were at the time Marxists and many were Communists. In the Soviet Union they played a unique role in the creation of the Red Army, convinced that sooner rather later the Red Army would have to fight Nazi Germany. In Spain probably every fifth or sixth volunteer in the International Brigades was a Jew. Of the American and Canadian contingent of 3,500 volunteers, 630 or about 20 per cent were Jews. Among the first foreign volunteers to join the Republican cause were German anti-fascists and among them were German Jews.

'Holocaust' did not hesitate to deal with Auschwitz, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the successful revolt in the Sobibor extermination factory. But I could not find anything that was right about the depiction of any of the three. The Auschwitz scenes do not even begin to convey the horror and brutality of the place, as anyone who has read any of the accounts by survivors or has followed the trials of some of the SS men who ran the most gigantic extermination factory in the Nazi system of terror and genocide must know. Survivors of Auschwitz have been incensed by the roominess of the barracks and the scenes where Mrs Weiss looks at her family photographs. The people responsible for 'Holocaust' did not even know that the tiny minority of Jews who did not go straight into the gas chambers on arrival were completely naked and without anything of their own when they entered the compounds of Auschwitz or Birkenau. The SS escorting the inmates look almost as civilised as screws in a British prison: no whips and no ferocious Alsatians trained to tear pieces of flesh from the defenceless prisoners. And, of course, Dr Weiss and Frau Weiss look as well-groomed as ever.

The 'Holocaust' version of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is so inaccurate and cheap as to be positively preposterous. The statement made by one of the Jewish actors that there were only 400 Jewish fighters and that the mass of 50,000 surviving Jews were too terrified to fight can only be described as a monstrous lie. In fact, there were two Jewish military organisations with a total strength of about 1,200 men and women and there were perhaps as many as 2,000 Jews who had somehow acquired pistols, revolvers or grenades and defended themselves to the end in small groups.

But the true heroes were the unarmed Jews, of whom there were more than 60,000. They absolutely refused to leave the ghetto and thus made the uprising possible. The Jewish fighters were so well supported by the civilians that by the end of the second day of the uprising Stroop could only report to Himmler that his force of over 2,000 men had managed to seize only 380 Jews, none of them fighters. In his report after the third day of the uprising he said that his nine assault detachments had captured only 505 Jews and only 28 Jews had turned up for transportation. In the evening of the same day he received Himmler's permission to give up all the previous plans to 'evacuate' the Jews whilst saving the industrial enterprises and was authorised to burn down the ghetto house by house and street by street. This he proceeded to do, but it was not until 16 May that he could account for the murder or deportation of over 60,000 Jews. But even then the fighting in the ghetto had not stopped and Jewish partisan groups operated in its ruins until November 1944.

None of this is even suggested in the 'Holocaust' soap opera. Instead, we are treated to a preposterous scene of a Passover feast with wine and candles and a rabbi sharing a roomy Austrian flat with Sam Wanamaker and his 'fighters'. This incredible scene is supposed to have taken place on 8 May, when every house still standing was on fire and the surviving Jews were hiding in the sewers or underground bunkers!

The Sobibor revolt, led by Aleksandr Pecherskiy, a Russian Jew, and Solomon Lejtman, a Polish Jew, is one of the most extraordinary events in the history of physical resistance to Nazi Germany. It was entirely the work of Jews, as the Treblinka revolt that preceded it had been. But the sheer incompetence of the producers of 'Holocaust' is such that all the British viewers I questioned about that incident in the serial told me that they thought the revolt was the work of Russian prisoners-of-war.

Reuben Ainsztein was born in Poland of Latvian origin. He escaped from Occupied Europe and was interned in Spain before reaching England to serve in the RAF. His family were wiped out in the Holocaust. He is the author of *Jewish Resistance in Occupied Eastern Europe*, shortly to be reissued in paperback.

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London Diary

☐ So Jim was a gambler after all. Elected PM by the safe, unimaginative lobby within the Parliamentary Labour Party, he has revealed an attractive, reckless streak, pushing his winnings back into the middle of the table in the hope of doubling them next spring. The accusations of clinging on miss the point. Though he genuinely likes the job, he is immensely less tense about losing it than either his predecessor or his opponent. Like Macmillan, he is of that relaxed, Whiggish species that tends to survive in English politics. He might yet fulfil all those prophetic noises he was making at his last question time before the August holidays: '. . . at this interim stage in my early career, remembering as I do that Mr. Gladstone formed his last administration at the age of 83 . . .', and carry on into the eighties – his own, that is. A few years ago, *Time* included Shirley Williams in their gallery of young European politicians who could 'turn the century'. But Shirley should beware: Jim will still be under ninety in the year 2000.

☐ Shirley Williams, like some of her colleagues, is ready, it seems, to put her unexpected six months bonus to good advantage. She has written herself an end-of-term report, foreshadowing rapid legislation to crank down the capacity of individual schools in an orderly fashion as the shortage of children creates spare classrooms for the first time since the war. Otherwise pushy parents simply crowd up the white ghetto schools, leaving the black ones half empty and dispirited. One of the side-effects of the Tameside verdict in 1976 was to destroy such residual control over these things as she thought she had.

She was also widely reported to be announcing the end of O-level this week; but her press officer tells us not to expect anything too soon as much consultation is going on. Consultation has been going on over '16 plus' exams for the past ten years, so I suppose a few more weeks will not make much difference; but I hope this is not one of Shirley's famous fits of dithering. The gulf between O-level (run by the universities) and CSE (run by the local authorities) symbolises the essence of English class apartheid: until they are merged, the reality of comprehensive education will still be far off. More to the point, why do we need mass public examinations for 16-year-olds in the first place? They are increasingly expensive and pretty irrelevant for job selection; and our continental neighbours seem to succeed in having schools in which children study hard, without relying on examinations to make them do so. Even our new system will still exclude a quarter of the age group from its 'benefits'. We need a system which sets out to encourage children rather than divide them into sheep and goats. Like the excellent advice I was given on my first day as a schoolmaster: 'Invent some marks between 75 per cent and 90 per cent and spread them at random around the class; then tell them all daily that they are far and away the most remarkable and intelligent group of children you have ever had the privilege of teaching.' It worked.

☐ I was in that hideous, glass sanctum of Europe, the Berlaymont building in Brussels, when the news – 'PAS D'ELECTIONS EN ANGLETERRE' – was in all the papers. (Francophones use England and Britain interchangeably.) Near universal gloom prevailed. Energy folk were bewailing six more months of their pet-hate Tony Benn, and a foreign affairs friend grumped about a further moratorium on 'progress' in imports of Portuguese textiles. Not that they imagined Mrs Thatcher to be a good 'European'; they were just longing for some weak British ministers to acquiesce in Commission policies. I got the impression that our Gaullist line in Europe was at last beginning to pay off.

☐ Press reports of the ABC marathon at the Old Bailey are predictably thinning out. It is partly the sheer tedium, as officers in civvies, endlessly identifying photographs, get gently rapped on the knuckles by the judge from time to time when they innocently reveal the location of some defence establishment or other; it is also because the press has to follow things blindfold, denied the library of documentation available to the court. 'Like being on the panel of the Book Programme when you haven't read the books' as a colleague put it this week. The jury look increasingly dismayed both by the mounting paper in front of them and the slow dawning of just what they have been let in for. They were told 'about six weeks' when it started and now they will be lucky to get away by Christmas.

☐ When the curtain comes down and the court goes into camera, one can savour the Bailey's other politically sensitive trial in Court 16, where 21 black teenagers from Lewisham are being prosecuted for 'conspiracy to steal'. Most of the youngsters were originally charged with 'sus' as well – under the 1824 Vagrancy Act it is still an offence 'to be a suspicious person in a public place'. But juries (unlike magistrates) tend to be affronted when asked to convict folk under this nineteenth century legislative relic, so the prosecution have discreetly dropped the lot. Conspiracy, on the other hand, is a difficult charge to rebut at the best of times, and even more so when you are young and black and have been allegedly photographed by the police consorting with your friends on the streets. The result of the somewhat similar 'Islington 18' case a year ago is instructive: 90 charges, 8 guilty verdicts and a cost to you and me of a quarter of a million pounds.

☐ If this week's White Paper – Review of the Mental Health Act 1959 – is a bit of a dog's breakfast, that was inevitable with its mongrel parentage. (It costs £2 from a strikebound HMSO.) It was fathered by Graham Young, who poisoned a number of folk and, amidst an outcry from the hardliners for greater protection for honest folk, precipitated the Butler Committee on Mentally Abnormal Offenders; but it was mothered by MIND, the National Association for Mental Health, who reminded the DHSS that the vast majority of mental patients are just unhappy citizens, with civil rights that get eroded. David Ennals, as midwife, has made a tolerable job of things. He has lost his battle over the Home Office's insistence on remaining judge, jury and jailor over the one thousand or more 'unlimited time' detainees in Broadmoor and Rampton. The European Court in Strasbourg may have something to say about that in a few weeks' time. But it has strengthened the rights of voluntary patients – those who know they are not quite together but do not want to be stigmatised for life by entering the hospital gates. They will have greater freedom to refuse treatment – whether by drugs or electricity – and to keep the privacy of their correspondence intact; and the doctors will have to cooperate far more with nurses and social workers in making decisions, before compulsorily detained patients are injected or given ECT against their wishes. It does not go as far as I would wish. But it does go some way to indicate that Britain is not quite the barbaric, uncivilised society which, as Bernard Nossiter pointed out in the *Sunday Times*, we are sometimes held up to be.

☐ A final postcript: I was relating progress on the ABC case to some Greek-Cypriot MPs at the Inter-Parliamentary Union last week, and telling them how the installations in their island were regarded as Official Secrets in Britain. (The euphemism 'an overseas territory' keeps cropping up at the Old Bailey.) They were astonished and puzzled, since quite intimate details of these installations are regularly discussed in their popular press, which is avidly read and condensed by the inmates of one of the largest Russian embassies in Western Europe. But then they have learnt to be somewhat less tense than we are about the exact nature of 'the enemy'. When they were invaded four years ago, it was not Russian, but NATO bullets that killed their comrades.

Christopher Price

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Lord Longford said yesterday that he saw no discrepancy between his fight to free Myra Hindley, one of the Moors murderers, and his battle for greater compensation for victims of crime. 'I supported both sides in the Spanish Civil War.' – *Financial Times* (R. D. Condon)

☐ Simkinson has made seven previous court appearances. It was stated that Simkinson is receiving psychiatric help in a military hospital. Lieut Kershaw Naylor told the magistrates that Simkinson fitted in well with army life. *Oldham Chronicle* (Eric Birtles)

☐ With courage and finesse Prince Charles has at last vindicated the British people by snubbing Idi Amin. Your own editorial on the 'Caliban of Uganda' was excellent. Those who pass over the boundary lines of discretion and good manners must pay the price. – Letter in *Daily Express* (J. B. Oliver)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Dutch Courage

It used to be possible a few decades ago, and perhaps it still is, to make sea-trips from the North Devon resort of Ilfracombe to various ports on the coast of South Wales in the Pembroke and Carmarthen areas. The boats that plied this forty or so mile passage were small and were always referred to as pleasure steamers, but the Bristol Channel was at that point more or less the open sea and choppy conditions and unpleasant swells meant that pleasure often swiftly left the helm and gave place to cries of 'excuse me, please' and hasty rushes to the rail.

My grandmother dreaded sea-sickness and in those pre-Kwell days the only known remedies were prayer and dabbing the temples with eau-de-Cologne, one as totally ineffective as the other. However, wishful to visit relations in Tenby, she once ventured courageously forth and was blessed with a calm sea and a radiant day. Having spent her entire life, when not in church, in vicarages, she could effortlessly recognise a vicarage-reared girl when she saw one and she made friends on board with two Bishops' daughters, saintly sisters considerably younger than herself and in their early twenties. She wrote to tell my mother, by then married and fled the nest, of this inspiriting rencontre, detailing the girls' charms and their serious, sober approach to life, for one never knew when a good example might not prove valuable, my poor mother being sometimes considered insufficiently serious and sober (in the sense of 'sedate') and getting herself frequently and reproachfully referred to as 'Miss Gadabout'. There was, alas, in my grandmother's letter one regretful and revealing sentence. It came at the end and after the recital of the girls' virtues, and it just said: 'But so sad – they had no work.'

By this melancholy statement my grandmother did not mean that neither of them was a trainee typist nor an apprentice *coiffeuse* nor preparing for a career in electronics. She was merely referring to the fact that fingers that should have been busy were idle – not a piece of embroidery in sight nor any intricate crochet-work. No knitting. No nothing. Dangerous, very. Victorians such as my grandmother always assumed, along with dreary old Isaac Watts who left us in 1748 and not one moment too soon, that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Further Watts gems of an equally depressing kind include 'There's no repentance in the grave' and 'Hark: from the tombs a doleful sound.' We know that he wrote the stirring 'O God, our help in ages past' but that little number never seemed to me quite enough to offset the militant and insistent gloom. Not a fun person really. The sort of chap that you accidentally on purpose forget to invite to that cheese and wine party. No spare barbecued ribs for *him*, and the frostiest of bows on leaving matins.

Anxieties as to the perilous activities that a girl might get up to if not fully occupied every second of the day were present in full measure across the Atlantic, where a useful volume entitled *What a Girl Can Make and Do* by the Misses Beard outwitted Satan all along the line. For the more robust and manly girl, carpentry was suggested and she was urged to equip herself with a hammer, meat-saw, chisel, plane, gouge and gimlet, after which away she went, happily constructing 'a piazza flower-stand' or an 'Alhambra' tea-table or a fancy indoor fernery to enliven that dark and dingy corner of the snuggery.

Those for whom carpentry and flower-stands, piazza or plain, had no message would be contented (and safe) enough making next year's Valentines, and here the delightful and winning style of our authoresses comes right into its own: 'Always alert, chubby little Cupid works hard on St Valentine's Day; his duties are many, and his pretty bow sends the arrows flying in all directions. He is a merry little fellow, full of queer pranks.' I'll say he is. The Misses Beard really think of everything and amid the welter of paste, cardboard, ribbons, gum, shavings, glue, basket-weaving and home-made dulcimers, healthful games are not neglected and there is advice on how to win at ping-pong ('Keep cool and think what you are doing') and information about offences at basket ball ('Kicking, shouldering, tripping, hacking') that require a girl to be instantly removed from the field of play and stripped of her school hat-band.

But in London and, of all places, alongside the tracks that lead into Baker Street station, infinitely more worthwhile occupations were available. There stood the Francis Holland School, originally intended for the daughters of clergymen and professional people. The names alone of some of its headmistresses inspire confidence — Miss Frost, Miss Strong, Miss Eagles, Miss Burke. The founder, in 1878, was courageous Canon Holland, with a London parish near Marble Arch, a man loved by all and with a pronounced Pied Piper effect on children. It is interesting to note that among the qualities inherent in the school's life, as expressed by an anonymous essayist in the school mag of 1888 ('Happiness and Loyalty, Industry, Docility, Amiability and Refinement'), it is Happiness that heads the list and Refinement that ends up well down the field. This was indeed a novelty. Admirable though they were educationally, it is to be doubted whether Miss Buss of the North London Collegiate School (1850) or Miss Beale of the Cheltenham Ladies College (1854) rated happiness quite as highly. Happiness by itself was suspect to the Victorians, though not to the Canon. Nobody laughed more merrily than he when the concertina, with which he had been enlivening the girls somewhat sluggish Responses at morning prayers, was laid aside and was seen to fold itself grumpily up with a dismal wail.

It is currently this splendid school's centenary year (it now hangs out in Clarence Gate, NW1) and a grateful Old Girl, Susan Hicklin, has produced a fascinating survey, *Polished Corners* (a quotation, as you'll have spotted, from Psalm 144), containing the historical background of this bold educational venture and including many contributions to the school magazine from pupils and mistresses that reveal, down the years, a rich output of sensible activity and endeavour. Canon Holland believed in ventilation and he threw open the windows in more ways than one. There were the experiences of a Suffragette whizzed away in a Black Maria for a cooling-off period in Holloway ('How nasty the cocoa was! '). A party of girls went off in the '30s to see what schools were like in Hitler's Germany ('The gym mistress was terrifying – a voice like a man's and long trousers'). Modern pupils now visit Russia and conduct brisk arguments with Intourist guides at Lenin's tomb. In the earliest days the girls spent their pocket money on providing food for neighbourhood children who would otherwise have gone breakfastless to school. At the turn of the century, dedicated sixth-formers worked weekly in the slums of Kennington teaching maimed and mentally retarded children. Homeless Korean and black Rhodesian children are nowadays being adopted. All this is Christianity at work in its most practical (and rarest) fashion.

Copies of the book are obtainable from the school at £3.00 a go, plus 50p for postage. I need hardly say that profits from the sale are to be used by the school to help prospective pupils in need. The Canon's spirit lives on.

Roger Woddis

Death of a Hero

'Biggles', the heroic airman created by Capt. W. E. Johns, has been banned from school libraries in South Australia.

From the shacks of Oodnadatta
To the Great Australian Bight,
In homesteads bearing funny-sounding names,
They are standing by to scramble,
When they get the warning light,
To shoot the Pommy bastard down in flames.

One may clearly see imprinted
On the flag that he unfurls
The values of a long-forgotten age:
Even more than booze or baccy,
His indifference to girls
Is written loud and clear on every page.

Though his line on racial matters
Is a view that few would share,
The Biggles books would still be harmless fun,
If they hired an Aussie writer
To re-jig them here and there
And substitute the Abo for the Hun.

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Letters to the Editor

Now hear this

Sir, As has already been made plain in my letter of 30 August, written by me as Chairman, to *The Times*, BP intends to say nothing in respect of the Bingham Report until its official publication, but there is one statement in Mr Bruce Page's comments in your issue of 8 September which should not go unchallenged. He suggests that the BP decision to make what he describes as a 'total confession' was influenced by the fact that BP knew that Lonrho had some material documents which would reach the Bingham Inquiry. This suggestion is totally unfounded and as Chairman, Counsel, Solicitor, Legal Adviser and Assistant Legal Adviser respectively to BP throughout the Inquiry we would state that the decision that BP would submit every relevant document and a full memorandum of facts had been taken before BP learned of the possibility that Lonrho had obtained some of those documents.

SIR DAVID STEEL
ROBERT ALEXANDER Q.C.
WILLIAM PARK
DAVID SARRE
R. W. BENTHAM

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Owen's inclusive settlement

Sir, Your Leader (NS 8 September) asks why the FCO is 'lending itself' to the 'destabilisation of the Patriotic Front and an attempt to divide its military and diplomatic forces'. The answer is that it is doing no such thing. This is not David Owen's policy, as he made clear in his speech to the Royal Commonwealth Society on 6 September (the italics are mine):

'We have . . . not discouraged contacts between the principals as a way of trying to lay the foundation of a successful *all party meeting* . . . We want, as both the leaders of the Patriotic Front want, as all the Front Line Presidents want, an *inclusive* settlement, not an *exclusive* settlement. For a settlement which deliberately seeks to *exclude* any party inside or outside Rhodesia will not achieve peace or stability. There can be *no vetoes* but equally *no deliberate exclusions*.'

DAVID STEPHEN
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Japan and World War III

Sir, Murray Sayle's article (NS 8 September) contains a number of mistakes and distortions. For example, he suggests that pre-war steel capacity was 12 million tons a year; in fact our capacity and production was much less than this. He claims that tanks are called 'special purpose vehicles' in Japan. I wonder where Mr Sayle got his information. When I was appointed president of the National Defence Academy eight years ago, a tank was always called a tank.

Mr Sayle also reports that our new constitution was drawn up by General MacArthur's headquarters and approved by the 'rubber-stamp Japanese Parliament'. It's true that the draft was written by MacArthur's HQ, but our Parliament was not a rubber stamp. This draft was revised on at least two important points. First, a one chamber system was revised to a two chamber system. Second, to Article 9 was added an extremely important clause which allowed us to build up our Self Defence Forces after we regained independence and sovereignty in 1952. By this sophisticated revision our Self Defence Forces are legal, not half-legal as Mr Sayle suggests.

Mr Sayle mentions my name in connection with the Peace and National Security Research Institute, and claims that our Institute will be the first post-war lobbying organisation openly devoted to pushing up the defence budget. In fact we are far from being a lobbying organisation. We will concentrate on two studies, the first on how we can articulate the image of Japan as a peace-state, and the second on what the security balance will be in the late 1980s.

MASAMICHI INOKI

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Sir, Murray Sayle's alarmist article on the implications of the recent Sino-Japanese treaty of friendship and co-operation ignores certain essential elements of the situation in the Far East which make a Third World War provoked by China and Japan almost unthinkable.

The People's Liberation Army is not designed to undertake large-scale offensive operations against another state (Tibet is hardly comparable to the Soviet Union). The strategy of 'people's war' demands that military operations take place on one's own ground. As there are no indications that Chinese military strategy has undergone any radical changes which would lead to the abandonment of 'people's war' there seems little reason to fear the Chinese provoking war with the USSR. What is taking place is a commitment on the part of the Chinese leadership to resist invasion by their northern neighbours. This is illustrated by the type of equipment they are using – for example, the Harrier jump-jet is not an aircraft suited to offensive operation. One should also not forget that it is Russia which is acquiring client states on China's border, not vice versa.

As for the Japanese, Murray Sayle underestimates the importance of their insistence on the inclusion of Article IV. A significant section of the Japanese business community wishes to participate in the development of Siberia. Hence the sending of a high-level delegation to Moscow after the signing of the treaty to reassure the Russians as to their intentions. One should not underestimate Japan's ability to keep both sides sweet.

Finally, what is the alternative? As the USA finds its role of world policeman diminished after its well-deserved defeat in Vietnam, it is essential that the Soviet Union does not feel itself able to take over as the leading imperialist power. The maintenance of a world balance of power depends on the development of a non-aligned bloc of countries independent of the two super-powers. This is something that we, as socialists, should actively participate in and encourage.

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Victims of thalidomide

Sir, Jack Ashley's letter (NS 1 September) is yet another example of an unflagging establishment eagerness to let Distillers off the hook. Above all, it's a distortion of the facts. The parents of these youngsters did *not* put their names down on a 'Y list', as Mr Ashley says: their names were on one thalidomide list which was arbitrarily divided by lawyers into 'X' and 'Y' categories. Without the signatures of these parents, by which they surrendered the right to sue Distillers for negligence, there would have been no settlement in 1973 for any children. Mr Ashley neglects to mention that many of the 'Y list' parents were unaware of the existence of two lists or that their children were to be left out of the settlement.

Mr Ashley says the criterion for Sir Alan Marre's report was based on his proposal. This is untrue; indeed, Sir Alan makes clear in his report that he rejected Mr Ashley's proposal. Mr Ashley goes on to parrot Distillers' most discredited propaganda, that to include all the 'Y' list youngsters in the settlement would mean that the company would have to compensate all children born disabled during the thalidomide years. This argument has long been exposed as utterly dishonest; at no time did I, or any others campaigning on behalf of these children, suggest that Distillers should include in the settlement children *other than those whose parents signed the settlement.* We asked only that the burden of proof be transferred from these long suffering families to where most fair-minded people believe it has always belonged – on the company that produced the thalidomide drug. Distillers have fought the thalidomide families every inch of their long journey for justice. That Jack Ashley should see fit to appear on television to effusively praise this company and to defend its 'honour' in your columns is sad, to put it mildly.

JOHN PILGER

Daily Mirror
London EC1

Houses of ill fame

Sir, As a Labour councillor I read with interest the article 'What would life be like under the Tories?' (NS 18 August) and I was particularly impressed by the analysis of the GLC's policy of selling council houses. As your reporters point out, this policy ignores the facts of housing need and public sector finances. Happily, such a policy is not pursued in areas under Labour control.

But is this so? Under direct rule, Northern Ireland is governed by Labour ministers, so it is, in many respects, in the position of having a Labour-controlled council. Housing is under the control of a semi-independent Housing Executive which answers to the appropriate under-Secretary of State, namely Ray Carter MP. Yet just a few days ago the Housing Executive announced its intention to sell up to 40,000 houses to sitting tenants, with discounts ranging from 10 per cent for 5 to 10 years tenancy to 30 per cent for over 25 years tenancy. The proposals restrict sales to 'areas where housing need has been met', yet the Province as a whole is drastically short of houses fit for occupation, with waiting lists reaching years in some deprived areas. Asserting that house sales will assist it to 'respond sensitively to the changing needs and aspirations of the population', the Housing Executive records its additional schemes such as equity sharing.

It is an open secret that Ray Carter and his predecessor, Don Concannon MP, have been the most eager advocates of this policy, and they have actively incited and encouraged the Housing Executive to embark on house sales.

Is there some simple explanation for the behaviour of Labour Ministers who flout Labour Party policy? Or is it just because they apply different standards in Northern Ireland from those pursued in local councils throughout Britain?

BOB KIDD

Newtownabbey Labour Party
Newtownabbey
Northern Ireland

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Peter Conrad

Portraits of the Artists

Men and Memories: Recollections 1872-1938 by WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN edited and abridged by Mary Lago *Chatto* £8.95

Rothenstein was a frump in an age of dandies, provincial, pug-faced and pedestrian. He even self-mortifyingly signed his love-letters 'your own ugly Will'. Disqualified as a dandy himself, he set about recording the dandyism of others, both in his portraits and in these memoirs, published first in three volumes during the 1930s and now uncomfortably compressed by Mary Lago. The memoirs are an intriguing adjunct to the portraits, for it is Rothenstein's diffident conviction of his own mediocrity – enforced by wits like Beerbohm, for whom he was an obtuse, amiable butt, or Phil May and Whistler, who derided him as a parsonical prig – which makes him such an acute analyst of the cozening self-images of others.

The portraitist's professional torment is the gap between his own perception of his subjects and their vain conceptions of themselves. None of us knows, despite our constant recourse to mirrors, how we look. We can laugh off the infliction of cameras when they defame us, because machines are impassive and irresponsible, and can't be expected to respect our susceptibilities. A portrait is more offensive than a photograph, because it testifies not to a machine's incomprehension but to another person's considered opinion of us. Auden rebukes the camera for romantically bragging that sight is vision and that 'to us, all objects are subjects'. The portrait is dangerous because it is a warning of the opposite truth: it reveals that we who are to ourselves charmed, omnipotent subjects are to other people merely squat, warty, physically decrepit objects. Looking at a portrait, we have the same nauseous sense of intimacy as in overhearing a conversation about ourselves. Instead of validating our reality, it leaves us feeling ashamed, inauthentic and indignant. Rothenstein drew Pater, and made him look plain and furtive, crouching behind a handlebar of facial hair. Pater considered the likeness a libel: 'do I look like a Barbary ape?' Ellen Terry complained that Rothenstein's Irving was too grim-visaged, and W. H. Hudson grumbled that he'd been made prematurely old and worn.

The English, Rothenstein says in a passage of professional self-pity, are especially studious of their own images and are therefore the most querulous of sitters: 'foreigners are less sensitive about supposed defects.' Rothenstein's gleeful enjoyment of his own grotesquerie (he beseeched Tagore not to forget 'the queer little ugly man at Oakridge') was an implicit reprimand to his subjects. Character, he suggests, derives from luxuriation in our own defects. Self-mockery of this kind is inverted self-approbation. Rothenstein remembers his embarrassments – reduced to dry-mouthed, sweating catatonia in the intimidating presence of Leslie Stephen; betrayed at a dandified dinner-party by a truant white tie, which undid itself with excruciating slowness – as comic triumphs. He loves himself for his own inanities.

This defensiveness about himself makes Rothenstein an aggressive portraitist, because he seizes on comparable self-deceptions in his subjects. The more impenetrable their vanity, the more he reveres them. The characters who dominate his memoirs are audacious self-inventors, who fabricate an identity for themselves and turn existence into performance: Wilde, Whistler, Augustus John. These men change themselves from plaintive, vulnerable subjects into immaculate objects, human artworks. They have nothing to fear from portraiture, because they are already the enraptured spectators of themselves. Rothenstein concludes that Whistler's character was 'unique and legitimate' not for any moral or psychological reason but on aesthetic principle, because 'he made his life a unity'. He had adopted character like a costume. Augustus John's repertory of selves is as ample as his wardrobe: he appears successively masquerading as a French fisherman with 'a tight jacket and wide pegtop trousers'; then in 'a check suit, with earrings'; and later during the war, 'looking superb in his uniform, the only bearded major, I believe, in the army'. Beerbohm, staying with Rothenstein in the country, startles the rustics by attiring himself 'with scrupulous care, with stick and gloves, to walk the 100 yards to the Nelson Inn to buy cigarettes', and Gerhart Hauptmann declares that artists should tittivate heraldically in 'fur-lined gowns and gold chains . . . at the end of each day's labour'.

Dressing up is a ceremony of self-adoration, a sartorial solution to that problem of identity which preoccupies the reticent Rothenstein and his touchy, conceited sitters: being is triumphantly equated with appearance; the subject is declared to be no more than the sum of its swanky garments. Rothenstein admires the blatancy of such self-invention, though he pities a later, frailer character, Tagore, who was credulous enough to believe in a self invented for him by sycophantic publicists. Feted and flattered, Tagore takes on trust the things people say about him, and becomes an object of wonder to himself. Lacking the brash armour of egotism which guarded Wilde and Whistler, he is destroyed by his own innocence.

Rothenstein is harsher with his pen than he ever dared to be with his brush. His own self-disgust comes to his aid when he is describing other people and so, surprisingly, does his quasi-colonial capacity for awe. His father was a Bradford merchant, and Rothenstein impersonates the gawky provincial dazed by the metropolis: he couldn't sleep on his first night on London, so elated was he by the thought that he was in the same city as Watts and Leighton. But it was his fate to meet his idols, and to discover that they were mostly innocuous and ill-favoured creatures who by some arbitrary evolutionary joke had been invested with genius. His disappointment gives a recriminatory edge to his accounts of character and appearance. Not only do the grandees not look the way they'd like to think they look (which makes them squabble over Rothenstein's representations of them); they don't look the way the ingenuous Rothenstein imagined them either.

George Moore, for instance, is a listless nonenity who acquires character only when writing. Rothenstein's drawing of him is an image of stupor: the eyes stare vacantly, the face droops. This, the memoirs reveal, is how he was when not at work, 'limp and purposeless'. Wilde made genius a full-time job, but Moore was a genius when writing and otherwise a dullard. Henry James is befuddled by his body. Rothenstein emphasises, in the memoir and in the drawing he made in 1898, James's ponderosity of person and manner, and he neatly connects the two. The later James's enmeshment in his own circumlocutions is not for Rothenstein evidence of an over-intricate intellectual complexity but simply a fatty degeneration of language. James's physical mass had made him immovable: he'd become one of those fluid Victorian puddings he so detested, and the quibbling periods and regressive equivocations of his syntax are his attempt to emit a statement, like the fat man's efforts to animate his corpulence.

Rothenstein's aesthetes never have bodies to match their minds. Wilde is 'huge and rather fleshy', with a low brow, bulging cheeks, irregular teeth, and puffy hands rendered more conspicuously otiose by the addition of an outsize scarab ring. Mrs Jack Gardner, the collector of pictures and friend of James, is 'notorious as a non-beauty, a fact she had the wit to recognise'. Huysmans, instead of resembling his fanatically precious Des Esseintes, is 'like a *fonctionnaire* . . . with his bourgeois collar and tie, and provincial clothes'. Despite the moody spirituality of his painting, Fantin-Latour is stout and shabby, 'with list slippers on his feet and a green shade over his eyes'. The most bewildering character is Sickert, by nature a fastidious aristocrat but a connoisseur of squalor, relishing fetid music-halls, pubs with sanded floors and lodging-houses for drabs with cast-iron bedsteads and ratty sheets. Rothenstein explains this affectation of sleaziness as 'dandyism *à rebours*', and as such it matches his own style of self-deprecatory self-consolation.

Portraiture condemned Rothenstein to

NEXT WEEK

Autumn Books

Richard Cobb on Danton, Kingsley Amis on Evelyn Waugh, George MacDonald Fraser on Jan Morris, Denis Donoghue on the Irish Renaissance, Phillip Whitehead on the CIA, James Fenton on David Gascoyne, Paul Johnson on the Country House, Arthur Marshall on Auberon Waugh, Edward Pygge on E. J. Thribb.

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traffic in vanity and imposture. He was determined not to share the fatuity and dishonesty of his subjects, yet in reaction he is archly modest to a fault. In *Men and Memories* he doesn't tell the truth about himself, because the vicissitudes of his career had convinced him of the impossibility of self-portraiture; but he tells some damagingly ludicrous truths about the contemporaries to whose self-conceit he had been obliged, as a portraitist, to surrender.

Edmund Ions

Hook You Also

The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower by DAVID CAUTE *Secker & Warburg* £9.95

Contemporary history ('instant history' to its critics) is now a heavy industry in the United States. It was well established before the Freedom of Information Act gave historians and commentators new weapons in the running fight between scholars and government archivists, but with the Right to Know inscribed in the US Statutes we can expect many more jumbo-size studies containing naught for the comfort of FBI agents, CIA directors, or the odd retired Secretary of State. It should be said immediately that David Caute is not one of those who crouched at the starting blocks, waiting for the Act to become law, in order to leap at the archives for lubricious treasure. His interest in the politics of the extreme Left and Right is well established in powerful works of scholarship – most notably a beautifully turned book on the relationship between French intellectuals and communism in our time. Indeed, and to the contrary, the most notable gaps in the rich harvest of sources and manuscripts used for this large and fascinating study are just those government sources and national archives which might at the least have put a gloss on the engaged, unrepentant and occasionally strident character of this major study.

Unstinting praise, first of all, for the extraordinary industry which has produced this book – that, and the compelling interest of the theme, the clarity of the writing, and the deft pen-portraits which bring to mind all the talents of Arthur Schlesinger Jr in his writings on New Deal personalities (although David Caute may not care for the comparison, since New Deal Liberals are for him renegades ultimately hoist by their own doubletalk). A reviewer can spare himself a quick clutch of native pride that a British writer can take on the Americans at their own game with 700 pages of spare narrative prose, backed massively by 100 pages of sources and references, not to mention the appendices. This approach to historical writing has its costs – to be reckoned hereunder – but let us at least concede that it makes history exciting, even compelling to read, and since this widens its appeal beyond academic groves and the cultivated tastes of the higher journalism, we should welcome such works. They do not prevent or inhibit the pedants who will of course come along later – and rightly so – to inscribe their caveats in the lapidary style of the guild.

The importance of David Caute's theme speaks for itself. During the early Fifties, the United States experienced a unique form of collective hysteria. The political dialogue was corrupted at every level, throughout the Union. The House Committee on Un-American Activities became the chief but by no means the only tribunal for destroying the professional careers of writers, artists, teachers, scholars, trade unionists, and able men and women in every calling. Not the least value of Caute's study is to show how HCUA (the acronym still seems to carry an odious, fugitive threat – 'Hook You Also'?) had its counterparts at the State and local levels. Senator Joe McCarthy's rantings in the Senate could at least be seen and heard: the silent ways of the Hollywood Blacklist, or the summary dismissal of a schoolteacher in New York City, were more despicable because they were less open. Beyond this, the contagion of fear and mistrust generated in the intellectual community has permanent lessons for what, to use a polite term, could be called the politics of accommodation, and which in practice came down to informing on friends or associates, letting down fellow teachers and writers, seeking to save one's own skin, or merely one's salary – and devil, or HCUA, take the hindmost.

It was an unlovely period in American intellectual history, and Caute is right to remind his readers of the personal tragedies which lay beyond the crude numbers of those blacklisted or who lost their jobs because they refused to lie or bear false witness. It is also right, on the larger historical canvas, that the extent of the contagion should be set down, warts and all, by an acute scholar, with a sharp pen and an honestly declared political commitment which sees no monopoly of virtue in any particular ideology or political system. Every system has its uses and abuses, and I am with Caute all the way in this central message to the zealots of our time, set above us or about us as the purview of politics extends itself to reaches where it simply does not belong.

That said, there are vital lacunae in this prodigious study. Caute makes the necessary and unquestionably sincere obeisance to the openness, the self-critical element in American society which made his study possible. The familiar litany of help and hospitality, of patient librarians and candid critics of their own country, winds its way through the lists of names and institutions. So far, so familiar. But it needs more than this, I suggest, to convey that McCarthyism in America was an aberration of the hour, and it requires the judgment of a very cool and a very collected historian to discover why this was so. A study of McCarthyism in its proper historical context needs a good deal more on the temper of the times (international, economic, political) and of its special mood – fearful, idealistic, in part recriminatory – to understand the American posture on *international* communism after 1946, especially in Eastern Europe.

David Caute has brilliantly conveyed the American fear, the mistrust, the contagion, and how it fed upon itself, with politicians and hacks ready to jump on an unlovely bandwagon in order to placate enemies or to win friends and influence people. But he has not explained why McCarthyism fell away so suddenly. The explanation cannot possibly lie in the simple and obvious fact that McCarthy over-reached himself as his wild charges turned from the Senate itself to the incumbent President; or that his drinking habits finally made the end clinical more than political. If the contagion was so wide, so deep-seated throughout the Republic, it took more than the comeuppance of a toper to end it.

Much the most disappointing section of this big book is the chapter headed 'Conclusion'. The reader – whether generalist or specialist – comes to the final chapter with the keenest anticipation. What hypotheses, what explanations, judgments, interpretations round out this major study? Alas, three brief pages in which the historian indulges – there is no better word – some flights of fancy into the wild blue yonder of incautious generalisation. Explanations? 'The Second World War had just ended: for some, it had always been the wrong war against the wrong enemy – the desire for retribution remained strong.' For others, however (the majority), 'it had been

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This English

A real lulu of a winner from the *Times* book pages: I can identify only three clear errors in the sentence, but every single word seems to be squirming for release. Then a double nob pronoun, two semi-homophones-cum-misuses (the hilarious 'replete' again, and the more unusual 'ethos', presumably a mixture of 'ethnic' and 'kudos') and a startling misplaced apposition: greater love hath no man. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Every justification for torturing, experimenting upon, hunting and eating animals can be applied, just as potentially now as it has often actually in the past, to doing precisely the same thing to human beings who any other human being decides is of less intelligence or is of great difference – through race, colour or sexual preference – from himself. **Roger Baker** *The Times* (Sebastian Robinson)

☐ She claimed that on one occasion, he invited she and 'Mis X' [sic] – one of the girls named in the charge – into his classroom ... a teacher, M. F. Adams, offered she and a friend, shelter in his cottage during a storm on a camping holiday. *Evening Standard* (W. P. Ross)

☐ Leslie Pound, replete with family, was in Jollywood for a few days before heading for Palm Springs ... **John Austin** *Screen International* (Ian Sainsbury)

☐ There's a lot of ethos about living in poor London now but there's much less about living in poor Liverpool. **Dr Downham** *British Medical Journal* (D. J. Miller)

☐ I should welcome information from any reader about the Leicester composer and musician Benjamin Burrows, who died in 1966 to aid my research. **Brian B. Daubney** *Musical Times* (T. Euler)

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the right war and the right outcome'. 'Then elation turned to alarm.' That is all. So much for the international scene. As for the internal political scene, 'The Democrats had, by 1948, occupied the White House for 15 years. After Truman's victory over Dewey, the Republicans became embittered, desperate, anarchic in their bid for power.' No, it won't do. Instant history has a way of inducing the frenetic phrase. Caute is dismissive about Earl Warren's attachment to Civil Rights, because he cannot quite credit that a Californian Republican could be genuinely moved by the plight of the blacks, or that even a Chief Justice can learn on the bench what he fails to exhort on the stump. And he is unkind to Harry Truman, who had to recognise that politics is the art of the possible, even for a man of decision. Perhaps the paperback could include an epilogue. The author, and the subject, ought not to settle for less.

Malcolm Bradbury

Naming of Parts

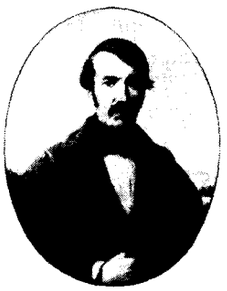
Jake's Thing by KINGSLEY AMIS *Hutchinson* £4.95

Comedy and the English novel have long been intimate. Few cultures, it seems, have been more successful in producing those spiky, oblique personalities, given to social aggression, outrage, and morose contemplation of the human lot and the absurdity of mankind's performance, so necessary to the creation of the genre. There are comic writers of benevolent disposition, who mean to amend and improve; there are more malevolent performers who mean to show the pointlessness of the whole human game. Evelyn Waugh benefited greatly from finding all action (including, in *Gilbert Pinfold,* that of the author himself) less than significant; he generated, in consequence, what seems an essential modern style, hard, fast, anti-psychological, lapidary, macabre, a clear step toward black humour. Other writers have more humanist pretensions: Kingsley Amis, for one. Waugh, though prepared to admit history *could* worsen things, really distrusted its business entirely. Amis, watching its collectivising, behaviourist, depersonalising progress, would like nice things to win and certain sense to prevail. Indeed, a humanist common sense – along with attention to farts – is to his world-view roughly what post-Heideggerian existentialism is to Jean-Paul Sartre's. On the other hand, biliousness and misanthropy have not eluded him; in fact they have come, in his canon, to co-exist with humanist common sense. Especially when dealing with now.

Now is, admittedly, a difficult time, especially if common sense has a lot to do with ordinary nice things like beer and Englishness and male cameraderie and good old sexual intercourse, compared in his last novel to licking ice-cream while playing with yourself. For suppose we are entering a cultural phase wherein changes in sexual mores, roles and the male-female balance of power, as well as contemporary theories of interpersonal relations, therapeutic fulfilment, and sexual engineering, are pricing traditional heterosexual intercourse off the market. Masters and Johnson rule OK; you can take a course in sex surrogate school; the times need vibrators and the sexless fuck; the specula is up the vaginum, and women are learning to do it all without men. While increased insistence on the mechanics of sexuality is in vogue, a certain disillusioned lassitude or mystery-loss could then be detected among many erstwhile participants, especially male. Amis, who has given us, especially in *Take a Girl Like You* and *Girl, 20,* various telling reports on post-war sexual mores, and generally has suggested that hetero-sex is one of the nice things that is nicer than the nasty things, might then feel disposed to report on these developments. You wouldn't expect a favourable report, going along with the radical orthodoxies, but you might get much comic glee. The result might be a book called on its jacket 'the funniest novel for a generation', though the generation in question would probably need to share the offered mixture of humanist outrage and machismo bile in order to get the supreme fulfilment.

The book is *Jake's Thing,* a bitter late Amis comedy on the movement from pubic to public. Jake Richardson, a 60-year-old don at Oxford – though operating from Orris Hill, up past Hampstead – has a healthy past record ('more than a hundred women') in the bad old good old days, but now suffers from loss of libeedo or libighdo, and needs treatment. Pronunciation jokes are important in the Amis canon. So are travelling jokes, which keep Jake crossing London on buses filled with Asians; and jokes about funny clothes, mostly worn by the titless young; and medical jokes, which take him through a wasteland of surgeries, hospitals, sex-clinics and group-therapy sessions; and collegiate jokes, which cause him occasionally to visit the ancient Oxford foundation of which he's a fellow, attend meetings re admitting women, and even give the odd lecture. Above all, there are sex jokes, freely administered. Jake's problem causes him to undress frequently, stand trouserless in lecture theatres, have measuring devices attached to the affected part, engage in non-genital sensory stimulation, and study pornography (not what it was). There are phoneys jokes: Jake is plagued by the mad new behaviourists, one being Irish and one American, familiar Amis bad signs, though they get their comeuppance, in the context an apt word, in the end. The plot has been heavily oiled to stop creaking; Jake's Ph.D. and his scepticism about modern womanhood might have spared him the quest in the first place, but we need an old guide through the new late-Seventies wasteland. Many of the jokes are not as good as some of the other jokes. But the main thing is the tone: outrage at the defeat of the ultimate privacy, coupled with unmistakable misogyny.

Trend-noticers will notice that we are now getting, along with its feminist obverse, a new literature of male angst and misogyny. Later Bellow explores it in the context of a wasting, wised-up world devoted to therapeutic romanticism; late Roth races the pains of male psychic disablement through texts of anguished confession. Late Amis, with *Jake's Thing,* goes to the lighter, softer end of the shelf, but it is pained and bitter for all that. Jake is the machismo shit in late middle age,



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the typical good-bad Amis hero with his arrant prejudices and quirky virtues. You can read the book for him or against him: as an attack on the behaviourist wasteland, than which even Jake's tired sexism must be better, or as a lunatic visitation of the punishments due to traditional male sexuality. It perhaps helps if you have a taste for sad farce and the comedy of sexual aridity, suspect women are bad for men, and have some sneaking doubts about whether Masters and Johnson are all for the best.

V. R. Berghahn

The Killer Elite

Germany: 1866-1945 by GORDON A. CRAIG
Oxford £10

Gordon Craig's contribution to the Oxford History of Modern Europe has been awaited for many years. It was nevertheless wise of him to delay publication until 1978. The Fischer Controversy on the origins of the first world war produced in its wake much detailed work on the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine periods, and more recently the debate about the structure and basic character of Nazi Germany has flared up again. Professor Craig has incorporated much of this new material and condensed it into an impressive 760-page survey of modern German history. This book is an indispensable reference work on the development of the country during the century up to the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945.

Compared with Theodore Zeldin's widely acclaimed, though controversial, study on France, which appeared in the same series in 1973 and 1977, Craig's book is less experimental and provocative. Above all, unlike Zeldin's, it is not a social history. The general approach is rather that of a political historian who is aware of the importance of other factors without giving them precedence over politics. The author has made an explicit concession only to cultural history, each of the major sections containing a discussion of cultural developments in Germany. These are particularly interesting chapters, though it should be added that Craig writes about 'high culture' and not about 'popular culture' or culture in the wider sense of the term. And this is the most striking thread running through the volume as a whole: Craig's *Germany* is a history of that country 'from above'. It deals with the elites of Central Europe.

Inevitably, individual decision-makers figure prominently in the analysis – Tirpitz, Bethmann Hollweg, Stresemann, Hitler and, of course, Bismarck, the founder of the German Empire of 1866-71. Professor Craig does not feel apologetic about this. 'Is it a mistake', he asks in his first paragraph, 'to begin with Bismarck' at a time when so much is written, 'and so insistently, about the primary importance of economic and social forces in history that one runs the risk of being considered old-fashioned if one gives too much prominence to personality?' And yet,

> whatever may be said about the movement of economic forces, there is no burking the fact that the decision concerning the form unification would take was made, not in the area of economic and commercial policy, but on the battlefield of Königsgrätz on 3 July 1866.

It is consistent with this emphasis on political and military history that the reader has to wait until page 80 before he learns that the second half of the 19th century was the period when Central Europe was hit by the Industrial Revolution. But even here Craig is reluctant to offer tables and statistics about the truly remarkable economic change which Germany experienced. He is more interested in the political consequences of boom and (after 1873) of depression. Thus he examines the emergence of pressure groups and political parties, Bismarck's struggle against the embryonic working-class movement and the Liberals' sell-out to the Prussian monarchical state. The dates in the title are therefore chosen with care and contain an important programmatic statement, even if this is not made explicit until the book's final paragraph. Hitler, he concludes, 'destroyed the basis of the traditional resistance to modernity and liberalism just as completely as he had destroyed the structure of the *Rechtsstaat* and democracy'. It was, according to Craig, in the early 1860s that the Germans had reached the crossroads between liberalism and reaction, parliamentary democracy and autocracy, rule of law and arbitrariness. By following Bismarck, Tirpitz, Ludendorff and Hitler, they opted for the latter principles until the demise of the Third Reich. The central theme of this study is hence the failure of 'the German people' (as they are called on the last page of the book) to opt, in the 1860s, for the solutions which the West Germans took up in the late 1940s after the removal of Nazism.

If there is anything in Professor Craig's book which I found paradoxical and not quite thought through, it is the discrepancy between this summary and the main thrust of his analysis. For, upon closer inspection, his bulky study tells us little about ordinary Germans, the 'masses', but a lot about the upper layers of society and *their* dismal failure to take up the 'correct' political options of the 1860s. Whenever he discusses the predicament and life of the mass of 'simple' people – such as the exploitation and repression of workers or the ideological manipulation of women – they emerge quite creditably from the upheavals and confusions that characterised this period. When relating the story of the resistance to Nazism, Professor Craig rightly begins with the Left and the opposition of the working-class and avoids devoting an excessive amount of space to the by now over-researched field of the conservative and military resistance which, somewhat late in the day, culminated in the Plot of July 1944. A few prominent 'Good Germans' apart, his picture of civil servants, courtiers, officers, party leaders and academics is hardly an edifying one.

The tone of his analysis becomes increasingly scathing as he moves from Bismarck to blockheads like Hindenburg and Ludendorff and finally to a megalomaniac like Hitler. He is prepared to credit the founder of the Empire with a good deal of political sophistication and diplomatic sagacity. But as early as 1870 hubris becomes discernible among the military and the National Liberals, and thenceforth the country was being led on a downhill path. Policy got completely out of hand in the post-Bismarckian period because

> its practitioners generally channelled events in illogical ways, set them to arrogant rhythms, directed them to dangerous goals, and quickened their pace instead of seeking to do the opposite; their boldness was self-defeating, and they allowed themselves fatalistically to be borne away by the flood in 1914.

Whatever Professor Craig may have been thinking of when he used this metaphor, it is clear that the Reich's leadership, at the end of July 1914, resorted to very devious methods in order to bring the Social Democrat movement into the war.

Again, when discussing the course of the first world war itself, a major theme is the appalling myopia of the dominant classes and their refusal to make concessions at home and abroad until it was too late – i.e. until the monarchical system had become almost completely discredited and destabilised. Nor can one feel encouraged by the story of the Weimar Republic, whose conservative elites did so much to undermine it while adhering to the illusion that Hitler, as Franz von Papen put it in 1933, could be 'framed in'. Finally, there were all those influential and educated people after 1933 who might have known better, and who stayed on 'to prevent worse' when the worst was already happening.

So where does this leave us? It looks as if Professor Craig has, no doubt unintentionally, blurred the issue when he refers in his conclusion to an amorphous 'German people', whereas the bulk of his analysis is really concerned with the actions and failures of the German elites. Substituting a term which is more amenable to sociological precision when analysing historical responsibilities and failures would also open up one final field of inquiry: if it is true that Hitler restored the options of the 1860s and, as Professor Craig

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writes, bequeathed to the West German elites 'the memory of horror to help them with their choice', it would be interesting to ask what they have made of the opportunity. The recent fuss about the career of Hans Filbinger, the former Prime Minister of Baden-Württemberg, certainly raises some very interesting questions on this score.

John Keegan

Bitter Fruit

The Lasting Honour: The Fall of Hong Kong, 1941 by OLIVER LINDSAY *Hamish Hamilton* £5.95

The great dramas of December 1941 in the Pacific – the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the invasion of the Philippines and the land attack on Malaya which was to culminate in the fall of Singapore – have obscured the pathetic little episode of the defence and surrender of Hong Kong. Major Oliver Lindsay, who recently served with his regiment, the Scots Guards, in the colony, has set himself the task of reconstructing its details, which he has set forth in this well-researched, readable and compassionate book.

The Crown Colony, which consists of the sovereign island of Hong Kong and the leased and much larger New Territories on the mainland, amounting in all to 400 square miles, was defended in 1941 by six British Empire and Commonwealth Battalions, the 2nd Royal Scots, 1st Middlesex, 5/7th Rajputs, 2/14th Punjabis, Royal Rifles of Canada and Winnipeg Grenadiers. The last two had been ill-advisedly offered by Mackenzie King as a token of imperial solidarity. They were scarcely trained. The Indian battalions, like all those in the Far East, had been milked of their long-service officers and NCOs to reinforce the Indian battalions fighting in the Western Desert. The Indian Army, being a mercenary force in which the men tried to serve for as long as they were allowed, had no proper reserve organisation. The British battalions had, as was usual under the prevailing system, both been abroad for a long time, the Middlesex for ten years. They too had lost trained members to battalions elsewhere.

To support this miscellaneous force – highly representative of the military state of things in Britain's Asian possessions – there was a little artillery and some local Volunteer units. Presiding over all was the Governor, with a major-general as military commander, and two brigadiers, one of them Canadian. The governor and commander had secure headquarters on the island in the underground Fortress. The troops were deployed partly on the island, which it was hoped to hold until a shadowy Chiang Kai-shek army could come to the rescue, and partly on the mainland, in the uncompleted Gin Drinkers' Line, a name so exactly descriptive of the tastes, character and mood of the local European society that one suppresses disbelief to see it written on Major Lindsay's excellent situation maps.

The smallness of the garrison might seem to have foredoomed the end. Yet here, as in the Philippines, Malaya and Burma, the force committed by the Japanese to the attack scarcely outnumbered the defenders. In infantry, the Japanese fielded only nine battalions against six and, if the Volunteers are counted against them, thus scarcely enjoyed an advantage. But, as well as possessing air superiority, they were a unified force, trained and equipped to a common standard. They quickly pushed the defenders off the mainland and secured too easily a bridgehead on the tiny island. What followed was a surprise, and the 'lasting honour' which Major Lindsay rightly claims for the defenders. For it took the Japanese another week to reduce them to surrender.

Major Lindsay, who has walked every inch of the ground, is at his best in describing this stage of the fighting, to which he brings a regimental soldier's understanding. He is also illuminating and dispassionate in his description of Japanese behaviour. It undoubtedly included frightful atrocities against the wounded, non-combatants, women and prisoners. On the other hand, the Japanese were deeply impressed by last-ditch courage and treated with respect, even deference, those whom they felt had put up a good fight, as so many of the small units did, under very junior leadership. And occasionally they could be almost cloyingly kind to prisoners, as were the crew and soldiers aboard a freighter to four RAF officers whom they continuously plied with 'sweets, fruits, whisky and coconuts'. It is refreshing to read a European account of a Pacific campaign in which the Japanese appear as human beings (even if mysterious and usually terrifying in character) rather than as stereotypes of fanaticism.

Politeness, however, gets the better of the author in his overall judgments. The battle of Hong Kong and its aftermath was a terrible tragedy. Almost a million Chinese, many hundreds of thousands of them refugees from the Japanese in the first place, were forced into flight, a movement of population analogous to that from East Prussia in 1945 or Leningrad in 1942. Neither the civilian government nor the military command appear to have made their welfare a matter for negotiation with the conquerors, an oversight not excused by the enemy's insistence on unconditional terms. Nor do Sir Mark Young or General Maltby appear, by the author's account, to have left Fortress Headquarters during the fighting to encourage the soldiers in their desperate resistance. He hints and implies that Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, Burma and the Dutch East Indies were the rotten fruit of European empire, ready to fall at the first energetic shake. He rightly perceives that the leadership was incompetent, complacent and racially arrogant, and that these qualities were characteristic of British officialdom throughout the Far East in the twilight of the taipan years. He clearly reserves his admiration for numbers of ordinary people, who did their duty for personal and local reasons. But he cannot quite bring himself to say so. Pity.

Among this week's contributors:

V. R. BERGHAHN is Professor of German History at the University of Warwick, and the author of several books on Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany

EDMUND IONS is Reader in Politics at York University. His books include historical studies of American politics, social and political thought, and of John F. Kennedy.

Timothy Mo

Magpie Man

The Singapore Grip by J. G. FARRELL *Weidenfeld* £4.95

J. G. Farrell's new novel is by far his most ambitious; happily, *The Singapore Grip* is also this brilliantly idiosyncratic and funny writer's most successful yet. There is no sense of the author having over-reached himself: his grip on his own imaginary world is as tight and expert as the delightful, eponymous clutch of the Oriental young ladies, celebrated for the control they enjoy over a certain autonomous muscle. The 545 pages of the novel take us from 1937 to 1942, concentrating on the last year when Matthew Webb, former worker with the League of Nations, goes to Singapore to take up his share of the family business of Blackett & Webb and finds himself in the web of Blackett's dynastic ambitions for his daughter. Then the Japanese invade.

The novel may be Farrell's private attempt at *War and Peace*. It is both a hilarious picture of the humanly ludicrous and an acute historical analysis, examining the old imperialism at its moment of dissolution in the Far East and considering the difficulties of behaving decently within that order. Earnest, bespectacled Matthew, ridiculously in love, tormented by the antagonism between the brutal self-

FRANK CASS

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interest he sees all round him and the altruism he believes is possible, might have been merely bumbling and uninteresting, but he isn't: he could be Pierre Bezukhov, and Singapore in flames evokes an earlier conflagration in another city.

Tolstoy's philosophy of history was explicit, and cordoned off in a special chapter; Farrell's is implicit, informing the book's structure, themes and development. The ideas are brilliant in more than one sense: they may be wrong, but they have a seductive shine. Farrell displays a hard-edged analytic capability rare in imaginative artists. The novel's title also refers to the strangle-hold of British capitalism on the area. The account of the development of the big Far Eastern commercial houses, the rubber business, the way native small-holders were systematically ruined, the unholy alliance of Indian money-lenders and Western capital which destroyed the old communities and created a pool of plantation and mining labour, the rise of Japanese imperialism – all this could be the work of a professional left-wing academic. Maybe it is. Farrell lists 50 reference books. But he has made the ideas his own – the author's personal act of expropriation. *The Siege of Krishnapur* showed the novelist as magpie, gathering historical anecdotes to garnish the narrative; the research supplemented invention. In *The Singapore Grip* the disparate elements are fused into an imaginative whole. Farrell cleverly sugars the pill by giving the theorising a humorous, incongruous setting.

Farrell's imagination is remarkable for its depth and intensity rather than its range. That is, he tends to build on the same sort of relationships, even if the individuals are richly differentiated (overpowering fathers and delinquent sons, attractive bitches tormenting their bemused suitors); the critical distance he maintains from his characters is invariable, producing the same relaxed prose which succeeds in being both ironic and warm. I suspect this is why the author has, as it were, pointed himself in a different direction of the compass for three successive books to avoid repeating himself. This isn't meant slightingly: Farrell characters are as unique as the densely imagined worlds in which they move, with their habit of seeming perpetually and politely appalled. No one is more politely appalled than Major Brendan Archer, who makes a very welcome reappearance twenty years on from *Troubles*.

The historical personages who appear are less satisfactorily done, and perhaps Farrell's tone is sometimes too genial for the material; it does not adequately encompass certain depths of feeling – though the underlying contempt for high-up callousness, bungling and self-seeking is scathing if indirect. Even the best writers have their limitations, and the author of this formidably witty and generous book is one of the best novelists we have.

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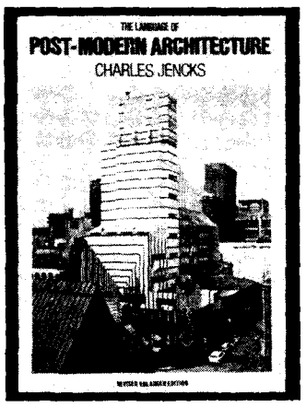

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Helen McNeil

Blind Lives

The First Polka by HORST BIENEK *Gollancz* £5.95
The Age of the Fish by ODON VON HORVATH *Heinemann* £3.90
An Imaginary Life by DAVID MALOUF *Chatto & Windus* £4.50
Merlin by ROBERT NYE *Hamish Hamilton* £4.95
The Action by FRANCIS KING *Hutchinson* £4.95

For the friends of the Piontek family, 31 August 1939 was a red-letter day. Valeska Piontek was giving a huge wedding reception for her daughter Irma, at the best hotel in Gleiwitz, a town in Upper Silesia just on the German side of the German-Polish border. Irma had offended her mother by insisting on a civil ceremony and then having the bad taste to wear her *Arbeitsdeinst* uniform. Nevertheless, the wedding party was a success, with dancing, drinking, *tableaux vivants*, and the usual political arguments going on all night – almost.

Horst Bienek's *The First Polka* gives a vivid and committed portrait of bourgeois ordinariness being pushed over into ruin by the pressure of history. With history supplying the irony, Bienek's characters release an unashamed human energy, ridiculous and moving by turns. There is a Tolstoyan generosity about Bienek's realism, as if the suffering his characters are about to endure has purged them of the guilt they already half-feel for their blind lives. His work also attains that difficult Tolstoyan contradiction by which the more a character is particularised by meticulous period detail, the more universally recognisable he or she becomes. *The First Polka* offers a kind of close-focus realism, where if the foreground is accurate, the perspective on the background will also be accurate. The war is always in the picture – everyone in Gleiwitz talks about when it will start – but it is not taken for real because no one wants it to be. For Bienek, survival is based on lying, or better still, lying without permitting oneself to be aware of the lie.

The novel's truth-teller, the cultured ex-magistrate Montag, is trying to write a biography of a Silesian patriot, but finds that he can neither abstract truth from historical evidence nor write it down properly. Bienek, facing the same problem, writes a novel. Montag decides that the most apt form of historical analysis in 1939 is the abandoned fragment. Bienek does not reveal immediately that Montag is half-Jewish, and Montag's own lifelong self-deception breaks down slowly. But when he sees the Holocaust ahead, Montag takes his manuscript, his piece of truth, seals it in one of the huge jamjars used by the gluttonous Silesians to preserve everything from fruit to fish, and buries the jar forever in his native soil.

Silesia, Bienek's own homeland (he was born in Gleiwitz and spent years in a Soviet labour camp), is one of those borderline districts where private lives are periodically flooded by history, just as every spring the dull local river sweeps away its quota of children before being appeased. In *The Tin Drum*, Günter Grass treated his native Silesia as one of history's more sardonic jokes. For Bienek, this land between Germany and Poland, Catholic and Lutheran, becomes a home ground for human diversity. To survive at all, the Silesian must be all too human, almost excessively alive. In such a place, all lives are political, all fiction is political.

First published in 1939 and now reprinted in a creaky translation, Odon von Horvath's *The Age of the Fish* takes place in the same Nazi nightmare. A liberal schoolmaster who has already been denounced for saying negroes are human has to take his students on a premilitary-training camping trip. His obsession with the secret lives of his students leads him to spy on what ends up as the murder of the student who had been his accuser. Horvath's economical narrative, part psychological, part political, conveys constraint so well that it is oddly disappointing when the teacher's decision to tell the truth triggers a series of confessions and changes of heart in other characters. History overshadows such an optimistic resolution.

A further country, the fringes of Roman civilisation, is the setting of David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*, based partly on the *Tristia*, Ovid's poem of exile, and in J. M. G. Itard's story of the wild boy of Aveyron. Ovid, banished to the silent nothingness of the world's end, captures a wild boy in order to civilise him. But the child was sent for another purpose, to teach Ovid a new language, one he had almost known when he was a child, and to metamorphose him beyond what Malouf uncharitably calls the 'pretty, explainable miracles' of his Latin poetry into understanding the otherness of the external world. The boy, Ovid realises, does not think 'It is raining', but 'I am raining'; he doesn't imitate birdsong, he becomes, for a moment, the bird

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who sings. After the child and Ovid flee from enraged villagers into a trackless wilderness, Ovid ends by following his Pan-like guide, growing 'ready at last for all the changes we must undergo'. 'Existing still, working still, even out there beyond the limits of speech', Ovid becomes at last the arch-poet, reconciled to an otherness which he loves in its humblest forms: seed, grub, pebble, water. Now he is ready to travel further into the landscape of death. Like Hermann Broch's *The Death of Virgil*, to which it forms a kind of reply, Malouf's death of Ovid is a meditation on the obligations of the poet.

In Robert Nye's *Merlin*, his second mythic novel (after *Falstaff*), everything calls attention to itself. Taking a revisionist view, to put it mildly, of the matter of Arthur, Nye creates a mockingly devilish babble through which the received story is faintly overheard. How many children had Lady Macbeth? Who were the parents of Merlin? To flesh out a myth usually trivialises it into the merely human. Nye may add genealogy and slapstick anecdote, but his creatures evade the human: instead, they are sounds. Their incessant giggling, scratching, farting, cursing, pissing, birching (lots of that), frigging and fucking only lead one away from any suspicion that these things have ever lived, or that they resemble us. They are just a lot of noise, and that is what *Merlin* is about: the complex noise of itself being told. Merlin the narrator, 'a man locked in the present tense', can only follow what happens as it happens. So the tale proceeds by jolts and leaps and halts. The narrative does not evoke an earlier or deeper magic. Nye's hell, like his Grail Castle, is parodic. What is left are the words which tell all this: aggressive, allusive, slangy and above all self-conscious. Sometimes the words can force perception and disgust simultaneously on the reader, as when each of several characters inhabited by the devil 'smile like a fox eating shit from a brush'. The obscene passages, with their mythic tits and bums, make the most powerful scenes in a book that has few completed actions. The non-humanity of these knighturnal emissions places them in the great reductive tradition of pornography – in which a man may call himself Sir John, but when things get going he is really only a John Thomas.

One of the more immediate risks of writing an English realist novel is that the character-painting will be so precise that the author is sued under the literal-minded English libel laws, according to which literature is fiction only to the degree that it is unrecognisable. Most English publishers now routinely submit novels to a libel reader. Sensible people write about Merlin, who never lived.

Hazel Saunders, the heroine of Francis King's *The Action*, has written about her own life with her brain-damaged child, and the price she pays for what she hopes is her honesty is to have her erstwhile friend Martha sue her for libel, and have the book withdrawn and mutilated. King, whose last novel was the subject of a libel action, has now taken a witty revenge on his persecutors, whoever they may be. In this novel of deliciously unpleasant English types, Hazel is almost destroyed by the massed forces of cowardice and hysteria. King has a nice balance of comedy and depression, with a few realistic tips thrown in. For example, even if you win costs in a libel case, you lose, because 'costs' are the court's thrifty estimate of what your lawyer should have charged, not what he did charge.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

The Virgin Soldier

The Philanderer *Lyttelton*
The Changeling *Riverside Studios*
The Rivals *Old Vic*

Bernard Shaw was profoundly untrustworthy on a good many subjects, from crime and punishment to vaccination, from Mussolini and Stalin to the multi-letter alphabet; but on none more than sex. He remained virgo intactus until he was 29, at which age he was enthusiastically raped by a widow-woman named Patterson, and he seems to have become painlessly and permanently celibate not long afterwards. His own marriage was almost certainly unconsummated, and he had little but scorn for those who found it rather harder to keep the old Adam locked in the icebox. The 'ancients' of *Back to Methuselah*, the most evolved beings he contrived to imagine, renounced physical pleasures at the age of four or five, rapidly dwindled into bald and wizened ectomorphs, and spent their remaining centuries in ecstatic meditation. 'What people call love is impossible,' he once said, 'except as a joke (and even then one of them is sure to turn serious) between two people meeting accidentally at an inn or in a forest park.' Note the mistrust of natural human feeling embraced in that gratuitously sneering bracket: it goes some way towards explaining why I, for one, have long found *The Philanderer* his nastiest, most emotionally stunted play.

But one of the many merits of Christopher Morahan's revival is that it forces those of my persuasion to ask themselves if they haven't over-simplified his dramatic stance. In the play Shaw draws on his own erotic experience, notably in a first-act wrangle based on what he called 'a most shocking scene' involving a jealous and violent Mrs Patterson, the actress Florence Farr, and, gulping and floundering somewhere in between, his own philandering self. The character of Leonard Charteris does, however, turn out onstage to be a less complacent, more apologetic self-portrait than a reading of the text or familiarity with its author might suggest. Shaw scatters his attack pretty widely, one might say indiscriminately. He has darts in his quiver for doctors and vivisectionists, for the 'new' woman and the old unreconstructed woman, for male chauvinists and even for theatre critics. He makes fun of Ibsen, or at least of his more fanatical followers, setting much of the action in an 'Ibsen Club' whose prime house-rule is that female members must be unwomanly and male ones unmanly: a piece of treachery that so upset his friend and fellow-Ibsenite, William Archer, that he cut him on the street for his 'outrage on art and decency'. But Shaw's most important target, as Mr Morahan's production makes clear, was Shaw himself.

This need not surprise us, for Shaw was more self-knowing than humanoid geniuses usually are. He was conceited and knew it, insufferably confident, and knew that too. He was an instinctive wag and tease, always inclined to 'make trifles of tragedies', and, as he himself confessed, 'a brute in matters of pure affection'. All this, and more, is embodied in Dinsdale Landen's witty and penetrating performance at the National. His Charteris is GBS at his most obnoxious, an opinionated narcissist with an invulnerable grin pinned like a row of medals above his beard, sprawling across the furniture and over people's lives with equal nonchalance. The accusation flung at him at one point, that 'the only use he can find for sacred things is to make a jest of them', is a simple truth, and not, as we might have expected, a symptom of the blimpishness of the elderly buffer who delivers it; and the ending, too, is a withering judgment on the character. For the first time in the play Shaw's stage directions seem somewhat critical of his surrogate, who is 'amused and untouched' by the 'keen sorrow' of the woman who has clutched and clawed at him, wept and ranted and humiliated herself for him, and now has been dispassionately rejected by him. But Mr Landen, as is his right, makes himself doubly repulsive. He smirks, snorts and gurgles with shallow delight, appalling the gathering with his insensitivity, while Penelope Wilton, playing Julia Craven, alias Jenny Patterson, stands like some thwarted Medusa nearby, black, boiling and trying to turn him to stone.

It is an ugly moment, enough in itself to categorise *The Philanderer* as a 'play unpleasant', but perhaps a little hard to fit into the Shavian funhouse. The task facing Mr Morahan is to reconcile and integrate the posturing Landen, the desperate and distraught Miss Wilton, Polly James as her priggish and virginal rival, John Standing as a comically credulous doctor, and much diverting satire and frolicsome event; and it is, I suspect, an impossible one. But the uncertainty of tone does reflect Shaw's ambivalent attitude to his subject. This is a rare opportunity to explore the criss-crossing back-alleys of what one might call the red-light district of his mind, and it certainly makes a suggestive and illuminating visit. In the play we don't find much sympathy for eros – it is, perhaps, best renounced, as the Farr-substitute, Grace Tranfield, renounces it – but we do find a grudging recognition of its power to obsess and cause pain. For all its hypocrisies and trickery, its excrescences and absurdity, it does matter very much to some, and – who knows? – maybe there's something lacking in those who, like Charteris or his creator, hold themselves smilingly aloof, participating mainly as observers and patronising those who don't. *The Philanderer* is Shaw's admission that people 'turn serious' because love and sex are serious to them, and, perhaps, his confession that those who refuse to do so are at best incomplete, at worst inhuman.

The first of the two *Changelings* due in town this autumn turned out to be rather too austere for my taste, a bit wanting in humour and colour. Certainly the bedlam subplot,

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commonly supposed to have been written by Rowley, could be more florid and garish. But there's no disputing the clarity Peter Gill gives Middleton's main plot, or, indeed, the gut-curdling relentlessness of what Eliot described as 'the tragedy of the not naturally bad but irresponsible and undeveloped nature, caught in the consequences of its own action'. Brian Cox is fell and impassive as Deflores, loathed by the spoiled Beatrice, hired by her to dispatch an unwanted fiancé, and thus able to secure supremacy over her body and, eventually, heart; and Emma Piper is his at first aghast, at last lickerishly consenting victim. The play's psychological sophistication is there to be relished, at least intellectually: what's missing is the sexual electricity that binds these Mediterranean Macbeths. Perhaps the RSC will provide that next month.

And perhaps the wattage of what's now a somewhat lacklustre *Rivals* will increase with time. Indeed, it must do so when Margaret Courtenay's stately Malaprop, substituted at no notice for the Reid version, comes to radiate greater confidence. The negative sign is a weakness for silly stage business; the hopeful one, some nice performances, not least Anthony Quayle's mottled Absolute, who has lately blundered out of the vat of port in which he's been stewing and seems determined to punish the world for his permanent hangover.

Art

John Spurling

Cold Sober

Rodrigo Moynihan – Retrospective *Royal Academy*
Critic's Choice *ICA*

Rodrigo Moynihan's peculiar gift is for painting the obvious. One could hardly ask for more straightforward images than those of *Private Clarke, ATS*, painted in 1943, and *HRH Princess Elizabeth*, painted in 1946 – the one buxom and fleshly, bright lips meltingly parted, khaki uniform well buttoned, peaked cap at the slightest rake; the other commandingly distant in spite of her soft blue outfit and expression of naïve sweetness. But the straightforwardness is in no sense superficiality. On the contrary, it is more as though the spectator were magically transformed into the artist and allowed, slowly and sensitively, to contemplate the sitter for himself.

There are several outstanding portraits in this show, from all periods of Moynihan's career – young and old self-portraits, the young Pasmore and the elderly Bacon, the David Sylvester of 25 years ago and the Benedict Nicholson of last year – and they all share this curiously pure effect, the removal of any sense of strained artifice, of this being a 'Portrait', with what that implies of showing up or showing off. The effect is even more remarkable in the two large group portraits, dauntingly entitled *The Teaching Staff of the Painting School, Royal College of Art 1949-50* and *After the Conference: The Editors of Penguin Books, 1951*. A lesser artist might have tried to avoid academicism with self-conscious mannerism, but Moynihan seems to relish the very conventionality of his task, offering elegant, punctilious, sober compositions whose life consists in the intense curiosity of the artist's eye. These assemblies of mandarins are treated neither as freak-shows nor as object lessons in dullness of the Euston Road variety, but as momentary gatherings of individuals, where personalities gain fresh definition from being observed in company. As one says of certain actors that they could recite the London telephone directory, so one suspects that Moynihan could paint the Soviet Praesidium, the Directors of the BBC or the Arts Council and against all the odds reveal their palpitating humanity.

The key to his success with groups is to be found earlier in the show in two wartime figure-paintings, *Group of OCTU Candidates Playing Chess* and *Medical Inspection*. The psychological tension of the OCTU candidates is communicated as much as anything through their shapeless, uncomfortable battledresses, while the obvious physical discomfort of the medical examinees, their torsos already stripped, their trousers about to be humiliatingly lowered, becomes an inward experience, partly shared, partly the more private for its public exposure. But it is one thing to be able to depict this small drama of vulnerability and defensiveness when its ingredients are given by the circumstances of war, quite another to elucidate its more subtle ramifications in, as it were, fully-clothed, fully dignified situations from ordinary life.

'Poetry', said Wei T'ai in the 11th century,

> presents the thing in order to convey the feeling. It should be precise about the thing and reticent about the feeling, for as soon as the mind responds and connects with the thing the feeling shows in the words; this is how poetry enters deeply into us.

At his best, in the portraits and group-paintings and in some recent drawings of woods, Moynihan's art works in exactly this way. The sad thing about his retrospective is that it displays so much that doesn't. Since 1957, when, abandoning his established position as an RA and Professor of Painting at the Royal College, Moynihan went to live in France, he does not seem to have trusted the evidence of his own brush. It is true that he first became known for pioneering abstracts – milkshake-like derivations from late Monet which were first shown in 1934 – but having discovered what he could do with figure-painting it is extraordinary that in the Sixties he should have floundered off into abstraction again. Not that abstraction in the hands of a Mondrian or a Rothko isn't as precise and reticent an instrument as Wei T'ai could desire, but that for Moynihan it is a high road to uncharacteristic stridency.

This crude and, I should think, exhausting encounter with unlocalised feeling occupied him until the Seventies when he moved into a phase of photo-realism – predominantly grey paintings whose subjects are technical impedimenta from his studio clinically isolated against large areas of blank space. They are disturbing paintings, in that their precision is no longer poetic but obsessive and even oppressive, as if the artist wanted to rub his own and his public's nose in the hard emptiness of an unforgiving profession. Fortunately they seem to have led him back – in the drawings and some recent portraits – to his true, poetic self. Almost the last glimpse we have of him in a small humorous self-portrait done last year, is bare-footed, hands in pockets, wearing a peasant's straw hat and suggesting, with his delicately blurred, ravaged features, a mandarin finally at home in exile.

John McEwen, the art critic of the *Spectator*, has inaugurated a new series of *Critic's Choice* exhibitions at the ICA with works by 17 British artists and one American photographer. I am not sure that it is wise in a regular reviewer thus to define the boundaries of his own taste, since much of his usefulness lies in an implied enthusiasm for any and every artistic event laid before him. McEwen's taste is chiefly for the austerely tentative, though his brief texts on each artist show this to be a special form of romanticism. It is a polite but dull selection which, if I were one of the innumerable artists not included, I should consider just one more example of the insignificance of British art criticism.

Television

Julian Barnes

Vu Sexy 75%

The Prime Minister must be chuckling about one aspect of his election deferment: it will have choked quite a few current-affairs broadcasters. This is the time of year when the permacrease safari suits come back from Sketchley's, minus a few medal-like stains, and the investigative reporters prepare for another stint in the Ethiopian desert, the up-country guerrilla hide-outs, or – as everyone assumed until last Tuesday – the safe, smoke-filled committee rooms of 50 marginal constituencies. *Panorama*, *Tonight* and *TV Eye* (Thames's uncatchily-titled replacement for *This Week*) are back with perfect timing for an autumn election – and what has the singing premier done? Packed them all back off to the Ethiopian desert and the up-country guerrilla hide-outs to put some fresh stains on their desert boots.

In *TV Eye*'s case, its first programme did at least offer a minute scoop: a double-length feature on That Baby (no, not Esther's), which included – presumably in response to the appeal in these columns a fortnight ago – an excellent shot of the proud Test Tube. It turned out to be a small, flat, circular glass dish (the opposite of *in utero* or *in fallopio* from now on is *in vitro*), quite unlike a proper test tube. (Where, I still want to know, is the original spawning bowl: is it in a museum yet? Who owns it? Can I buy it?) As for the product of the dish: 'On such-and-such a day, there was born to an English couple, Mr and Mrs John Brown . . .' began Peter Williams's almost Biblical intro, laden with hush and awe. The Browns, we next learned, are 'a refreshingly ordinary couple' (what does that mean? that they're not ordinary, or that they're very very ordinary?). Fortunately, with the appearance of their refreshingly ordinary baby, all the involuntary comedy of birth and parenthood began. Mrs Brown was pictured holding Louise and banging her on the back as I believe you have to in order to get them to make the horrible noises which are apparently good for them; suddenly, over the head of her whooping and barking mite,

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she turned to her husband and smiled. 'She's fillin' 'er nappy as well': to which he responded with a seraphic grin of wonder.

The best comic scene, though, was during the operation for removal of the Brown egg. For this the two experts, Steptoe and Edwards, work in separate rooms 15 yards apart, connected by intercom; as Steptoe probes and delves, he gives a running commentary to the masked Edwards squatting in front of his microscope. 'Hullo, Bob', he starts, 'we've got a very nice follicle in the right ovary, and we're approaching it now. We should be aspirating in a few minutes.' It reminds you of nothing so much as bomb disposal, with the brave defuser talking through his tinkering so that, if the worst happens, the others will know where he went wrong. This time, Mrs Brown didn't explode, and some red liquid arrived beneath Edwards's microscope. 'Yes, a lovely egg – a very nice egg indeed,' he reported back over the intercom, and Steptoe knew he could put away his gardening tools.

One thing to emerge undeniably from the film was the painful need of a lot of women to have babies. They fly in to Oldham from all parts of the globe, only to find the Steptoe waiting-room already full of depressed couples with blocked fallopian tubes. 'I never won any prizes, I was never very good at school . . .' wailed one blockee manifestly soured by her inability to breed. This part of the film was quite moving; but the comedy resumed as soon as Steptoe talked about the vulnerability of the hopeful mothers. 'If you told a woman to stand naked on her head in Piccadilly to get a baby, a lot of them would do it.' And if you told a woman to have her innards splattered over a million TV screens and help two doctors get rather rich, a lot of them would do that as well.

The newly puritanical Vietnamese, to judge from *Panorama* (BBC-1), would probably have captioned some of *TV Eye*'s footage 'Vu sexy 75%'. One of the quainter moments in Tom Mangold's equivocal but fascinating report was a visit to a museum of decadent Americana. 'These are pornographic books imported by the US aggressors,' explained a breathtakingly pretty girl from the Ministry of Culture, pointing to a pyramid of the sort of magazines Bobby Fischer consumes endlessly, topped up with works like *The Sensuous Woman*; a picture-sequence of a stripper at a decadent aggressors' nightclub was thought fully labelled from 'vu sexy 50%' to 'vu sexy 100%'. Explaining why a record sleeve of *Dr Zhivago* was on display, the girl said that when famous works were translated by the aggressors, 'the words were modified. For example' – a heartbreaking smile – 'they speak well of insignificant love.' Easy to patronise at first; harder on recalling the (official) figures quoted of three million VD cases (on top of half a million drug addicts) when the communists took over.

Mangold's film rightly left one with the mixed emotions he himself obviously experienced. Admiration for the Vietcong's tenacity and ingenuity in war blended understandably into a desire to give the new regime the benefit of the doubt. Some of the answers he got, however, were less than comforting, especially concerning forcible deportation to the New Economic Zones – a trip for which the unemployed, the Chinese, and the middle classes are all booked. The creepiest moment came when a jubilant soldier was asked about the disappearance of most of the country's Buddhist monks (official government policy permits freedom of religion). Was it true that some had committed suicide? The complacent and sinister new-ruler reply was, 'Some monks and nuns burned themselves to death as a reactionary trick.' Whom did they think they were fooling?

Films

Richard Boston

Rogue Male

The Boxer (A) *Scala*
The Silent Flute (AA) *Columbia*
Grease (A) *Empire, Leicester Square, ABCs Bayswater and Fulham Road*

While watching a film called *The Wild Bunch* several years ago I decided that I had seen enough films which glory in male physical violence and that I would have no more of it. Since the glorification of male physical violence is what most films are about, my cinema-going since then has been severely limited. Apart from *Annie Hall* and *The Return of the Pink Panther* I've hardly seen a film for ages. Of late I have begun to wonder whether I might be missing out on what friends assure me is an important art form. The invitation to act as NS guest critic for a fortnight seemed like a good opportunity to find out, and I gladly accepted. As a result I have seen more films in the past week than in the previous two years.

The first film I saw confirmed my very worst fears, since – sure enough – male physical violence is what it was full of. It was called *The Boxer*, and was directed by Shuji Terayama. I went to it in high hopes on the strength of the reviews that had already appeared, but in my view it is a thoroughly pretentious and reprehensible film. Although Terayama makes plain the unpleasant realities of boxing he does not condemn the business, and if anything glamorises it. The story is that of a young boxer called Temma who wants to be champ. One day at work something goes wrong with the crane he is operating and he accidentally drops a car on top of one of his work-mates. This gains him an introduction to the dead man's brother, a screwed-up retired pugilist who looks like Glenn Ford and is called Hayabusa. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the two men do not get on well to start with. Nevertheless Hayabusa agrees to help Temma and to train him to become the next All-Japan Paperweight Champion, or whatever.

Everything is against them. Temma has a bad limp, which is a drawback for a boxer. Hayabusa is losing his sight, which is not much good for a trainer either. All kinds of things go wrong. Hayabusa's dog falls ill. Temma, having killed Hayabusa's brother, starts having it off with his daughter. Relations become strained (in every sense). However, against all odds Temma makes it to the finals of the East Japan New Junior Featherweight Championship, where he is matched against the ferocious Hurricane Shanghai. By the end of the bout Hurricane and Temma are both on the canvas. Temma is the first to stagger to his feet. His face has been beaten to a pulp. His fist is raised in victory. He staggers over to the corner and falls into Hayabusa's arms. End of film. Had *The Boxer* been made in English it would have been perfectly apparent that it is no different from a hundred B-features about poor boys using their fists to get to the top. Since it is in Japanese, and has fancy camera work, an enigmatic plot and an ambiguous personal relationship between the male protagonists, it is taken to be a work of art. If you like John Wayne films and the sight of men hitting one another, then you may like this one, but it's no more a work of art than the wrestling programmes on television are, and unlike the wrestling it isn't even funny.

Unlike *The Silent Flute* too. This is also about close and unfriendly encounters of the male kind, but it is all such palpable nonsense as to be really quite enjoyable, and contains many laughs, not all of which are unintentional. The film is described as the first mystical martial arts adventure, and is dedicated to the late Bruce Lee, who apparently had a hand in devising it. It is, says the publicity, 'a story he [Bruce Lee] believed would not only enthral audiences but capture the spirit of Martial Arts and the Zen philosophy by which he lived'. The Zen philosophy consists of such gnomic utterances as 'A horse has no udders and a cow cannot whinny'; 'The ant persists where the elephant flounders'; 'Tie two birds together and though they have four wings they cannot fly' (guess which of the three I made up). The farrago is set 'in a land that never was – and always is' and it concerns the quest of a grinning man called Cord for the book of Zetan, which is held to contain the answers to everything. To reach Zetan, Cord has to overcome many obstacles, most of whom are played by David Carradine. There's lots of male physical violence, but it's of such comic-strip nature as to be inoffensive even to my tender sensibilities. It consists mostly of jumping up in the air and kicking the other chap on the chin while simultaneously grunting or making *aaaaaaaaaaagh* or *oufff* noises (depending on whether you are delivering or receiving the blow). Nobody seems to get hurt, and the whole story is a dream anyhow. At least I think it is.

The idea of three films in one week was a bit daunting. Fortunately the last was the best. I went to *Grease* expecting – almost intending – to hate it. To my complete surprise I enjoyed every minute of it. Well, nearly every minute. It's 111 minutes long, which turns out to be a good 40 minutes longer than my attention-span. The setting is an American High School in the 1950s, some time shortly before the harsh realities of *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Blackboard Jungle*. The Age of Innocence, before anyone had heard of civil rights, or Vietnam, or Watergate, or Flower Power, or Student Power, or Black Power, or

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drugs, or any sex other than that of a most fumbling in-the-back-of-a-car kind. The boys and girls all talk tough, and they chew a lot of gum, and the film takes cognisance of such realities of adolescence as acne and condoms.

Nevertheless, the whole thing remains as wonderfully innocent as the Garden of Eden. This film is the kind of film they used to make before they started making the kind of film that stopped me going to films. It's got all the old Twenties and Thirties Hollywood qualities. Singing and dancing and romance and fun of a kind that I (as a confessed non-cinema-goer) have not seen since *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. And an abundance of that quality which the United States still possesses in unique abundance, and that is the overflowing, electrifying, exhilarating energy of the kind that causes one to use far too many adjectives in one sentence. It's a tale of true love, by the way, and it all turns out right in the end, and the whole thing is so damned affirmative and clean-cut and *nice* and well-intentioned and anxious to please and wanting to be liked and nostalgic that – well, what can I say except that I wept buckets? Of course, my lachrymose state may well have been caused by the chain-smokers sitting all around me – which, now I come to think of it, was the other reason I gave up going to the cinema.

Opera

Peter Conrad

Alchemical

The Makropoulos Case *Welsh National Opera*

Janáček's source for *The Makropoulos Case* is a play by Capek about a woman whose life has been protracted by an elixir and who after three centuries wearily desires death but hysterically fears it. Capek designed the play as a rebuke to Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw's metabiological optimism is countered by Capek's metachemical pessimism: the longevity of Shaw's ancients is a serene unilluded excogitation of the mind; the dreary eternity to which Capek's Marty is condemned preserves the body only, and exterminates the spirit.

Scientifically, Marty connects the alchemical mysticism of Emperor Rudolf II (for whom her father concocted the potion) with the fatalism of modern chemistry. Alchemy is millennial, promising to convert base metals to gold or to prolong youth. Modern chemistry is apocalyptic, declaring that all natural processes breed decay. The magical projects of the alchemists, intended as an improvement of shoddy, temporary nature, were arrested by Lavoisier, who argued that nothing in nature can be either created or destroyed but only transformed, and that the act of transformation is always degrading. Hence the desperate conservation of energy which is the law of modern science; and hence Marty's panic to keep herself alive by intriguing to recover the Makropoulos formula. Marty's professional activity (she is an opera singer) abets this chemical parable. Alchemists foment elemental changes, turning earth into air by means of an intermediary element, fire; singing too is an alchemical transubstantiation of body into spirit by the exhalation of breath. But to the tired, entropic Marty the vocal miracle is no longer a source of joy, only another harbinger of dissolution. In practising her art she is consuming herself, expending the spirit on the air. 'Singing is the same as keeping silent,' she says in the play.

At last she renounces the formula and chooses to die, submitting to the universal degeneration. Her body both decomposes into earth and evanesces into air. In David Pountney's production for the Welsh National Opera, Elisabeth Söderström as Marty subsides into a pile of clothes which no longer seem to contain a body. Her cosmetic physical preservation suffocates the spirit: the soul, she admits, has died inside her. But by acquiescing in physical perdition she revives the soul: she dies not only singing but intoning a prayer. Meanwhile the document guarding the secret, which she has offered to the apprentice singer Kristina, is burned. Critics are fond of seeing this as a gesture of expiation, but Kristina (at least in the Welsh production) is too inane a flapper to carry such a weight of significance. The burning of the paper is actually a supplementary chemical death and transfiguration to accompany Marty's decline, converting the earth into air, a solid into a carbonic gas.

The Welsh company copes brilliantly with this crabbed, unforthcoming work. Janáček's abridgement of Capek's text elides causes and creates surreal dislocations in the drama, corresponding to the jagged, jerking rhythms of the score; Pountney and Söderström sort out the contradictions and restore the abbreviated motivations. Söderström almost manages to humanise the gelid character. Her Marty is not a sempiternal cynic but a woman saddened by her omniscience, dismayed by the power she has to make others love her (in her dissuasion of Gregor), regretting her own incapacity for affection (when she remembers her antediluvian infatuation with Gregor's ancestor), even maternally consoling her victims (when she asks Gregor about his childish nickname). She is happiest with the idiotic Hauk who enables her to be an irresponsible gipsy and in his innocent mania wants nothing more than to play games with her. Her spite and disdain are a reflex of lassitude and impatience, not cruelty: as she says in refusing Vítek's inept compliment, she knows 'more than you all'. Her own death appalls her, but the deaths of others amaze her. Capek's play asks the character to be callous and dismissive when she hears of Ferdi's death or tells Gregor 'everyone has to die soon', but Söderström at these moments is both aggrieved and envious, wondering at the power lesser lives have to contrive their own extinction.

The prerogative of Marty's inhumanity is her humorous inconsistency. She comprises all emotions but accredits none of them, and is by turns alluring and frigid, imperious and skittish, reticent and lewd. She is even free to alternate between tragedy and comedy. As a comic character, swigging her medicinal whisky, embarrassing Kristina with her *double-entendres*, or lapsing into a snoring doze, she is a relative of Janáček's vixen Bystrouška: the instinctual, unscrupulous vixen is beneath human nature, Marty is beyond it. But as a tragic character she is a descendant of Janáček's self-tormenting Kát'a Kabanová, resigning herself to suffer death in atonement for her crime against nature.

Maria Bjørnson's ashen designs turn the lawyer's office into a Kafka castle of paper pinnacles and dusty toiling clerks, the stage of Marty's theatre into a cemetery of baroque props studded with discoloured skulls, and her hotel-room into a mausoleum of dress-dummies. The set, its irregular perspectives of brick and board lit from behind, at first resembles a strung-up skeleton, but as Marty collapses the shafts of light radiate into a nimbus. Her death for Capek is a waste, the second law of thermodynamics at its insidious work, but for Janáček it is a redemption, and the crumbling set changes into an altar on which Marty is sanctified. In accepting mortality, she at last becomes immortal.

Russell Davies and John Coleman are on holiday.

Sport

John Sturrock

Good Form

The nearest thing to organised sport of which I have had first hand experience these past two weeks has been volleying wristily with a defunct badminton racket at the mosquitoes of southern France. The pesky little buzzers had grown too bloated, topped up as they were with visiting English blood, to jink their way to safety through the close if flaccid mesh, and they met a gratifyingly audible death spreadeagled on its intersections. This nightly grudge match may have been one-sided but it gave much pleasure to the winner.

It also gave some consolation for having abandoned home and country for the delights of the South on the second day of the final Test against New Zealand. It is maddening to see a game of cricket begin and then have to wait a full fortnight to learn how it ended, but keeping up with the score when you are abroad isn't the casual matter it once was. In Provence the cricket season means something else – that salubrious time of year when all you can hear from the hillsides at night is the prettily sawing legs of the grasshoppers. Only the fanatical could tolerate the expense of dialling 154 for the recorded close-of-play score from the depths of the Vaucluse; and you need to be unusually flush in these days of the shrunken pound to think of scouring the kiosks for a contemporary English newspaper merely to find out what has become of Boycott in your absence. How many precious francs is it worth laying out to discover whether the unbowed Brearley has gone cheaply again back at headquarters, when a single copy of *The Times* costs exactly the same as a litre of therapeutic plonk?

No, the braver and at the same time more frugal answer when you are starved of life-giving sports news in France is to go native and buy *L'Equipe*, that country's admirable and proven sporting daily. It comes out every day except Sunday and makes up for that gap with a fatter than usual edition on Monday morning. Is there anything to equal it in any other country? Not that I know of. Its existence has to be the reason why, by our own

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standards, the sports pages of so many French newspapers are meagre and half-hearted. *L'Equipe* is all sport, every last ludic column inch of it. As a reader there is no having to creep guiltily past the serious pages, as you do with less specialised organs, in order to get to what matters. You can start with the football on the front page and, if your appetite holds up that long, read your way compulsively through to motocross or the world pelota championships on the back.

It being self-evident, I would have thought, that the British care more for sport than the French do, how is it that France has *L'Equipe* and we have nothing of the sort? *The Sporting Life* always sounded as if it ought to be an equivalent but in fact it is a scandalous misnomer. It is not about sport at all but about horse-racing, and the betting side of horse-racing at that. It is a guide to form on the turf and ought to be stripped of its deceptive title. Maybe it will one day when someone has the good idea of starting up an English version of *L'Equipe*.

The French original was at its best during the European Athletics championships in Prague. It filled two or three vivid and exhaustively documented pages on them each day, and did so with none of that benumbing insularity familiar to addicts of our own sporting press. It was properly informed about foreign competitors as well as the French ones, so that it was able to be realistic about the hopes of the French runners before they had lost instead of afterwards. Mostly they did lose, as expected. The British team, as *L'Equipe* saw it, was a let-down and the 'big loser' of the championships, despite the victory of Steve Ovett in the 1500 metres, which was described warmly but also a shade ambiguously as 'imperial'.

Radio

Peter Porter

Salvage

Stealing from a colleague is an old NS reviewer's privilege which I intend to invoke this week. I am tempted by the music critic's territory, and it happens that the finest radio programmes I have heard since getting back from holiday have come from the music department of Radio 3. Two were relays from the *Proms*. The sound of Solti's Chicago Symphony in Tippett and Bruckner on successive evenings was a tribute not only to the orchestra's amazing virtuosity but also to the BBC's expertise in broadcasting live concerts. The other Prom was Rameau's *Les Boréades*, a feast of good tunes, spectacular orchestration and extraordinary vitality, composed by an 80-year old curmudgeon of genius. No wonder it lay unperformed in Paris for 200 years until John Eliot Gardener dug it out. As custodians of their own art, the French make the British seem like a nation of Maecenases. My third musical occasion was Paul Hamburger's *Interpretations on Record*, where he compared famous artists' performances of 'The Well-Tempered Clavier' on piano, clavichord and harpsichord. He confined himself largely to the D Major and D Minor preludes and fugues from the First Book. The technicalities were never obtrusive and always revealing, and Hamburger said more about Bach the man and his attitude to music in this one programme than most biographies and commentaries achieve in 500 pages. It ran for 65 minutes, a handsome enough span to get something worthwhile said. Such series as these record interpretations are seldom praised and easily overlooked.

Two virtuosi of the voice have been delighting us on Radio 3. A record of Vladimir Nabokov reading in English his poem *An Evening of Russian Poetry* was a challenge to my prejudices. Liking to keep my critical responses up to Nabokov's feline standards, I listened for each not-quite-natural inflection, each touch of posh pedantry, each little false prosodic emphasis. But I was overcome: it was a clever poem and it ended as a moving one. In exile, Russian émigrés, like Stravinsky and Nabokov, seem to have added sheer professionalism to their skills. As with the pentameters which begin *Pale Fire, An Evening of Russian Poetry* did not feel natural as English poetry, but the discomfort of the native listener is part of the poem's tactics. Nabokov is the rare artist who saves more from the linguistic wreck than was originally on the ship.

Laurence Lerner is a rarity, too, a professor of English literature who has enthusiasm for his subject and a genuine desire to say something positive. He also has one of the best voices on radio. He gave three talks on love and marriage in literature, which were full of insights and good sense but which I enjoyed most because of his superb delivery. It may sound off-putting to say that he almost sang his script, but if more dons would learn to show off a little at the microphone, we might have fewer criticisms of serious talks from philistines in the BBC top brass. I was sorry that Professor Lerner devoted so much time to D. H. Lawrence (could we have a close season on Lawrence and women, or Lawrence and anything?), but his final talk, *Feminism and Love* (Radio 3), dealt with novels by Doris Lessing and Elizabeth Jane Howard and was a long way beyond the re-cycled truths of the English Department.

In *Dr Johnson Investigates* (Radio 4), Leo McKern had a fine old time bringing practical sense to the solving of a murder in David Garrick's company at Drury Lane during a performance of *Macbeth*. Boswell tried to make the fleshly acquaintance of Sarah Siddons (properly played as a prig), Mrs Thrale presided over a Streatham dinner party, and Handel provided the music. It was all a bit like a Gainsborough costume film, but was written by Richard Brayshaw with such lightness of touch that it remained a pleasure throughout. The production, like so many of the best things we hear in drama these days, was by Brian Miller in Bristol.

Two reassessments of writers (something which goes on all the time in broadcasting) were undertaken by Radio 4. In *Dictatorship of the Prigs*, D. A. N. Jones considered the Fabians and their allies, concentrating more on Henry Salt and Edward Carpenter than on Shaw and the Webbs. He recorded a fascinating interview with Salt's widow, a working-class girl of little education, not in the least overwhelmed by the talkative bullies of his circle. It was interesting to hear George Orwell as defendant rather than prosecutor. His attack on Shaw and the rest as cranks was itself savaged by Benny Green and Brigid Brophy, Green asserting that Orwell knew less about working-class people than Shaw did. A. S. Byatt did a consummate job of compression by telling the story of *Tolstoy* in 45 minutes. How like Boswell Tolstoy's self-accusing diaries sound. This programme, too, helped restore the balance of its subject – not all the sympathy went to his wife, Sonya.

Weekend Competition

No 2532 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

The Music Hall was strong on stuff about the day-to-day joys and sorrows of working-class life, but we lack similar chronicling today. So could we have music-hall songs about the problems of getting Social Security, being a one-parent family, going on a package holiday in Spain, joining a closed shop, and so on. 12 lines by 29 September.

Result of No 2529 **Set by Mr Chubby**

We asked for examples of Greenwell's Gnomic Nonet.

Report **by Fatboy**

We asked you only to observe the decreasing line-lengths of the Nonet, and to put the subject's name in the first line; but, as we suspected, at least 15 per cent of you incorrigible compers felt obliged to have a go at the quirky Greenwell original. We print one of these (Menage). Three quid per Nonet.

Zek, a woman of the Sabine tribe,
Said 'I'm upset, as I'll describe.
All these chaps came on this raid,
And did things. I'm afraid
Some girls had real fun,
But I got none.'
'You,' said one,
'Not rape
Shape.' WAYNE SIDESADDLE

Stanley J. Sharpless and Martin Fagg
Vied to become the Melvyn Bragg
Of the stalwarts of the Comp,
Hoping for extra pomp
'Mongst the next party
'S *literati*
When they meets
For Keats'
Eats.

That realistic author Tolkien
Said 'What do my novels all mean?
I fear those fey elven folk
Are just a bad joke;
Yet Gandulf the Grey
Really does pay.
So don't gripe,
Just type
Tripe.' M. K. CHEESEMAN

Militant fury, Queen Boudicca,
Fixed scythes to the wheels of her char-
Iot, saying, 'These will cut
Anything that may jut;
They're fine dissuaders
Of invaders.
First-aiders
Can't fix
Pricks.' HARRISON EVERARD

'This ceiling,' said Michelangelo,
'Looks very well, viewed from below;
But there'll be no prying Pope
Who will climb there, I hope;
Apart from the tits,

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There's other bits,
For this hall's
Got Paul's
Balls.' A. BOTEMAN

Michelangelo Buonarotti
Thought the Pope distinctly potty
Wanting the Sistine Ceiling
Tutto Fresco. Kneeling
On a sort of sling,
He knocked the thing
Off – and how!
Look now ...
WOW! MOLLY FITTON

Garibaldi invariably
Breakfasted on inky coffee,
A peach and a cigar. Such
Elegant symmetry
Of austerity
And luxury
Pleases me
Very
Much. MARTIN FAGG

Cranmer took King Henry the Eighth's side
And favoured the Royal Divorce,
Thus becoming Arch. of Cant.;
But when the Queen Regnant
was Mary, of course
Cranmer changed hors-
es; was tried,
and died,
fried. JOYCE JOHNSON

Marie Duplessis, Dame aux Camel-
Ias. Tragic her end as poor
Mad Ophelia's; pupil
Of Lizst's, inamora-
Ta; Verdi enlists
Dumas' martyr
In La Tra-
Via-
Ta. GERRY HAMILL

John Churchill, of Marlb'rough the
great Duke,
Owed his promotion to the fluke
Of managing to attain
The bed of Castlemaine;
His sister, what's more,
Was James Two's whore.
'Fame?' he'd brag,
"S in the
Bag!' JAMES SKINNER

Hi there! My name is Jimmy Carter,
Once considered a non-starter;
My spectacular progress
Is due to God, I guess.
But what is success?
Peanuts, merely,
Which clearly
Explains
Plains. STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Each a governess, each Brontë kid!
Except for Branwell. What he did
was to be, always, quite tight
by day as well as night,
ending on the floor ....
He'd paint and draw
(corks). Tutor,
kissed, dis-
missed! GAVIN EWART

Nero's Family Circle dwindled
As a number of his kin bled:
Fratricide, uxoricide –
Mammy launched to the stars.
Assassinations
Of relations –
A dam's shame –
The blame
Ma's. ANNE MENAGE

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
Had no temps for Tom, and dumped Dick
To marry Ari, who had masses,
Liked classy lasses: sic
Transit Gloria.
The story o-
F her life's: 'Wi-
Dow wi'
Dough.' WILL BELLENGER

Tony Miles

Chess

No 100 **Anti-Nimzo-Indian Variation**

The 'Tornes del Vino' at Montilla-Moriles is one of Spain's leading annual tournaments. Despite being only a 10 player event it has considerable status. Two years ago Karpov won convincingly, and Michael Stean has twice scored GM norms there. This year the tournament was weakened by the last minute withdrawal of the US GM Kavalek; he was replaced by one of the organisers, there being no one else available.

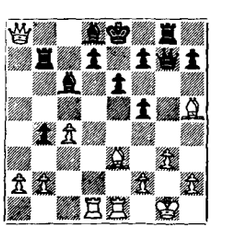
After my recent form I felt I was overdue for a good result and I very nearly achieved one. Only an atrocious last-round blunder cost me a share of first place which, thanks to my generosity, went outright to Boris Spassky (USSR?) with 6½/9. I was left to share second place with Hort (Czechoslovakia), Gligoric (Yugoslavia) and Bellon (Spain), half a point behind. However, I had the minor consolation of playing one decent game which was awarded the brilliancy prize:—

White: A.J. Miles **Black: B. Spassky**

1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. N-KB3, P-QN3; 3. P-B4, P-K3; 4. B-B4, my latest anti-Nimzo-Indian variation. It has the merit of being completely untried at master level (consequently unanalysed) and, having played it all of three times, I am now undoubtedly the world's leading authority on it. Indeed, after one or two more it will probably be named after me! **4... B-N2; 5. P-K3, B-K2.** According to Chess Encyclopaedia 5 ... N-K5 is good for Black. I, of course, disagree as, it seems, do my opponents. **6. P-KR3;** 6. N-B3, N-KR4! gives Black less trouble. **6... 0-0; 7. N-B3, P-Q4; 8. P × P, P × P;** 8 ... N × P; 9. N × N, B × N; 10. B-Q3 is slightly better for White, as in Miles-Browne, Amsterdam '78. **9. B-Q3, P-B4; 10. 0-0, N-B3; 11. N-K5, P-B5!? 12. B-B2, P-QR3; 13. P-KN4! P-QN4; 14. P-N5, N-K1; 15. Q-N4, P-N3; 16. QR-Q1, N-N2; 17. P-KR4, B-N5?** A serious mistake. Probably best is P-N5; 18. N-K2, P-B3 though White retains some advantage. **18. N-Q7! B-B1;** Forced 18 ... B × N; 19. N-B6ch, K-R1; 20. P × B followed by P-R5 is hopeless. **19. N × QP, K-R1; 20. N(5)-B6, R-R2.** Best. If B-K2; 21. B-K4 or N-K1; 21. B-K5. Now White must lose the N(Q7) but in the meantime he mounts a decisive attack. **21. P-Q5! N-K2;** If N-R4; 22. P-R5 and Q-R4; **22. B-K5!** Now P-R5 is not clear: e.g. B × N 23. Q-R4, P × P with ... N-N3 to follow. **22... R × N;** Not B × N; 23. Q-Q4! wins. **23. P-R5!** Not 23. Q-Q4? N-B3! Or 23. N × R, Q × N and Q-N5ch. **23... R × P; 24. Q-B4, R × R; 25. R × R, Q-R4;** On Q-N3; 26. P-R6 wins easily. **26. N-K8! P-B3** Or ... R × N; 27. Q-B6, R-N1; 28. P-R6 mates quickly. **27. P × P, K-N1;** Or R × N; 28. P-B7, R-B1; 29. P-R6, N-B4; 30. Q × N, B × Q; 31. P × N mate. **28. N × N Resigns... N-B3; 29. P × P soon forces mate.**

Problem 100

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 27 September.

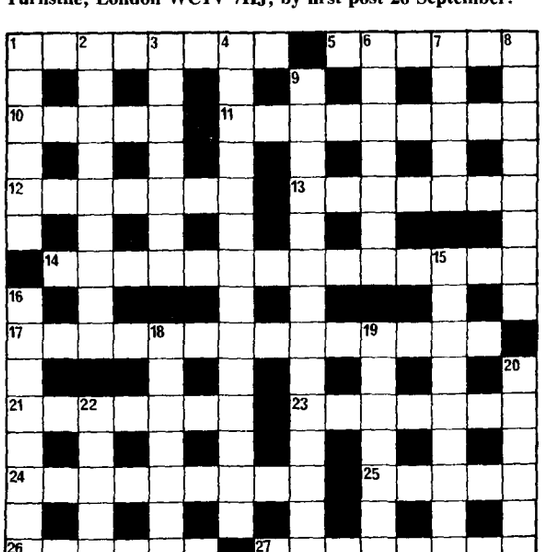


Solution to Problem 98

1. P-Q6! R × P (Or B × QP; 2. Q-B5, P-N3; 3. R × Pch mating) 2. Q-B5, P-N3; (or Q × B; 3. Q × Q wins) 3. Q × Pch! P + Q; 4. R + Rch, K-N2; 5.R(1)-B7 mate.

Weekend Crossword 1276

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1276, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 26 September.



ACROSS

1. Lights a river binds together (8)
5. Quote me in return a kind of medicine (6)
10. It sounds like food for an explorer (5).
11. Farewell with a refusal about money for a star (9).
12. Fabric made from two animals (7).
13. Joins up although less tin is used (7).
14. Occupying a position in life where the means of progress is provided (7, 7).
17. Song which puts a man between country and people (8, 6).
21. Succeed in it without a female (7).
23. Poem makes a point with hint about record (7).
24. Where there is a noise about silver being changed (9).
25. Draw in an extra illustration (5).
26. Tell if Tony runs wild (6).
27. A broken chair can get out of hand (8).

DOWN

1. Though a primitive creature, I love an egghead bachelor (6).
2. Teacher of religion shows *the tomb is about to teach* freely (9).
3. Southern for remote destination without first-class return (7).
4. Everyone looks down on his pictures (8, 6).
6. Paper provided for everyone in the morning when getting up (7).
7. 'Trochee —— from long to short' (Coleridge) (5).
8. Religious gesture for passing over (8).
9. Mr Callaghan and Master Steel *embroiled*? (5, 9).
15. Character changed when appearing in drag, I hope! (9).
16. There is small reward in an honourable kind of music (8).
18. Unusual rules of royal pronoun (7).
19. Animals permitted to climb as means of communication (7).
20. Writer who makes company go back to Bronte (6).
22. Holiday-maker from Louth (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1274

C	A	P	O	R	A	L	■	C	A	P	I	T	O	L
U	■	U	■	U	■	E	■	H	■	A	■	E	■	O
T	A	R	T	S	■	G	L	I	S	S	A	N	D	O
B	■	C	■	S	■	I	■	C	■	T	■	O	■	K
A	T	H	E	I	S	T	S	■	B	R	U	N	E	I
C	■	A	■	A	■	I	■	S	■	I	■	■	■	N
K	I	S	S	■	S	M	A	T	T	E	R	I	N	G
■	■	E	■	B	■	A	■	O	■	S	■	T	■	■
H	A	R	V	E	S	T	I	N	G	■	P	A	L	M
A	■	■	D	■	E	■	E	■	S	■	L	■	A	■
W	E	A	V	E	R	■	S	W	E	E	T	I	N	G
K	■	P	■	C	■	H	■	A	■	C	■	C	■	N
B	L	A	C	K	P	O	O	L	■	U	N	I	T	E
I	■	C	■	E	■	P	■	L	■	R	■	S	■	T
T	R	E	A	D	L	E	■	S	K	E	W	E	R	S

Prizewinners to No 1274

Dorothy Wood
(Babacombe)
J. L. Martin (Scunthorpe)
Mrs. P. Smith (London N20)

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APPOINTMENTS

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

wishes to appoint

Two Information Officers to develop the work of the Information Department in servicing the information needs of NCSS staff and of voluntary organisations. NCSS interests cover the complete spectrum of social policy in which voluntary organisations are engaged.

Information Officer A will provide editorial assistance to the Council's regular external information bulletin **NCSS News Service**; give support to the press and public relations officer; and take responsibility for information work in one or more selected areas of social policy in which the NCSS is involved.

Information Officer B will act as a member of the information team and concentrate on developing a number of areas of special knowledge relevant to NCSS interests, becoming a resource on those areas to staff and inquirers.

Qualifications desirable for both posts: A social administration background (and preferably a qualification) and a strong interest in the potentialities of voluntary organisations. The ability to assimilate material quickly and convey its meaning concisely and in a lively manner is essential. A creative and flexible approach and an interest in the development of social policy is also necessary. Post A will suit an applicant who is also keen to develop skills and knowledge in the media.

Salary: £3,385-£4,694 pa, plus £133 London Weighting allowance (under review). Four weeks and three days annual leave. Superannuation scheme. Subsidised lunches.

Further details and application form from the **Administrator, NCSS, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel. 01-636 4066.** Informal inquiries welcome – please telephone Margaret Hyde on the same number. Closing date: 29 September 1978.

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DIRECTOR

of the

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Edinburgh's new Film Centre
Housing Edinburgh Film Festival,
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RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL WORK STAFF

Residential social work staff are required for a house unit in this purpose built List D School for 73 boys.

The school is sited 2½ miles south of Penicuik (approx. 13 miles south of Edinburgh) and has five house living units. Four of the units are already fully staffed and operational and it is now intended to open the fifth unit for 15 boys.

Persons appointed will be expected to work as part of a multi-disciplinary unit team responsible for the day-to-day organisation and administration of a house unit providing a high standard of care. They will liaise with families, social workers and other external agencies in assessing, planning and meeting the needs of the boys in their care.

Salary £2,043 - £4,608 plus supplement of £312 per annum, depending on qualifications and experience for a 40 hour week. Hours worked in excess of the basic week are paid at either £1.82 or £2.19 per hour up to a maximum of 380 hours per annum.

Housing is available.

Holiday entitlement — 6 or 8 weeks plus 1 day depending on qualification.

Further details and application forms from the **Headmaster, Wellington School, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 8PU,** to whom forms should be returned.

The Labour Party

requires

MARKETING OFFICER

for Labour Weekly, the newspaper of the Labour Party. The successful applicant will be principally in charge of direct sales efforts through the Party organisation. He/she will work in liaison with the Circulation Manager, and will report directly to the Editor of Labour Weekly.

A thorough knowledge of the Labour Movement is desirable and experience in the organisation would be an advantage.

The salary scale is £4,345 - £4,645 per annum depending on appropriate experience in a similar capacity.

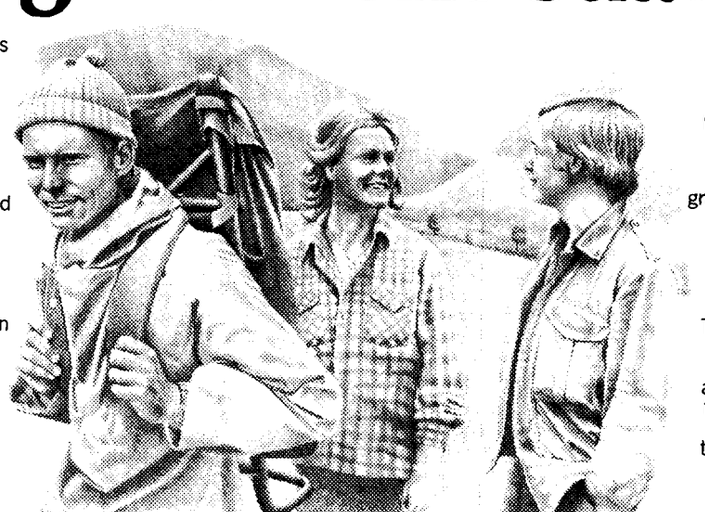
Application forms can be obtained from the **Administrative and Personnel Officer, the Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA. Telephone 01-834 9434.** The closing date for applications is Friday, 13 October 1978.

Previous applicants need not re-apply.

Graduates: we'll give your trained minds a good work-out.

The involvement of probation officers with offenders ranges from prison and community work to supervision orders made by the courts. Working on alternatives to prison sentences is probably the most constructive, rewarding and intellectually stimulating aspect of a probation officer's job. That's why graduates, with minds that are flexible and receptive, prove so valuable in this kind of work, walking the tightrope between concern for the offender and concern for society — even when, as sometimes happens, that tightrope can take the form of fell-walking, sailing or Outward Bound schemes. Such situations can emphasize that crucial personal relationship between the probation officer and his client, the offender.

HOW DO YOU START? Normally through sponsorship as a trainee probation officer on a course of professional training recognised by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work which leads to the Council's Certificate of Qualification in Social Work. Courses for men and women graduates last between one and two years depending on your degree subject.



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Graduate trainees are paid at present a salary of at least £2,823 which rises after training to £3,624 and then, on promotion, to £5,850 and above. Highest grades earn up to £9,817 (currently under review). Probation officers in the London area receive additional remuneration.

'The Probation and After-Care Service in a Changing Society'
To obtain a copy of our booklet get in touch with your local Chief Probation Officer, (you'll find the address and telephone number in the telephone book), or send your name and address on a postcard to the Home Office, Probation and After-Care Department (V/C/1), Room 256, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

Probation and After-Care Service

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Resident Housefather

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Salary: £1,821-£3,279 (includes latest pay supplement), less £453 per annum for board and lodging charges (subject to review).

Application forms obtainable from and returnable to Mr P. E. John, Headmaster, Mount Tamar School, Row Lane, Higher Street, Budeaux, by 26 September 1978. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

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Further details of position and application form may be obtained from: **Clive Jenkins, General Secretary, ASTMS, 10-26A Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DT.**

The closing date for completed application forms is **Friday 27 October 1978.**

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Please write in confidence giving full particulars to:

The Chairman, Amethyst of Reading, C/O 12 Iris Court, Tilehurst, Reading RG3 4JX.

SOCIETY OF CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVANTS

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Applications for this appointment which should include particulars of age, educational qualifications, present and previous employment and Trade Union experience must be received not later than Thursday, 28 September 1978, addressed to the **General Secretary, Society of Civil & Public Servants, 124/130 Southwark Street, London SE1 0TU** from whom application forms are available.

This is a readvertisement, and those who applied earlier and still wish to be considered, should reapply by the due date indicating their interest, but will not be required to complete a further application form.

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CLOSING DATE: 13 NOVEMBER 1978.

OTHER CONDITIONS: Reasonable appointment expenses are paid and assistance with housing is given for an appointee from outside Canberra.

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Prospective applicants should obtain further particulars from the Director of the Humanities Research Centre, The Australian National University, PO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.

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Vol. 96 No. 2478

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Info: 836 5332. Premiere David Mercer's 'Cousin Vladimir' (low price prevs Wed., Thurs.). See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in premiere Stephen Poliakoff's 'Shout Across the River'.

CHICHESTER. 0243 81312. Last perf. tonight at 7.0 'The Aspern Papers'. Tomorrow last 2 perfs at 2.0 & 7.0 'Look After Lulu'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE 722 9301 'Gloo Joo'. A new play by Michael Rudman. Prevs. Thurs. 14 Sept. 8 p.m. Press night 20 Sept. 7 p.m.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier 'Macbeth', 'The Double Dealer' (prevs from 22 Sept); Lyttleton 'Plunder' & 'Plenty'; Cottesloe promenade season 'Lark Rise'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

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Meetings

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'RACISM KILLS THE BLACK MAN'. Talk by Louis Chase. London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terr., London W8. Sun. 17 Sept. 7.30 p.m. Adm. 30p.

ORLANDO LETELIER Memorial Meeting: Letelier challenges Pinochet from the Grave. Speakers and films on the Assassination Conspiracy and Multi-National Banks and Repression in Chile. Thursday, 21 September 7.30 p.m. Friends House, Euston Road, NW1. Jointly sponsored by Race & Class, Transnational Institute, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Chile Committee for Human Rights, Chile Solidarity Campaign.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. 'Police Powers and the Judges rules', Harriet Harman of National Council of Civil Liberties at 5 Tavistock Place. Wed. 20 Sept. at 7.30 p.m. All welcome.

THEODOR HERZL SOCIETY, 57 Eton Ave, NW3. Tues. 19 Sept. 8.15 p.m. Dr Allan Gerson, Senior Prosecuting Attorney, Dept. of Justice, Washington, DC 'Israel, The West Bank and International Law'.

THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH SOCIETY. Come and hear Stuart Froome, the Bullock Report dissident, Herringham Hall, Bedford College, Regent's Park, NW1, Saturday, 23 September at 2.30, followed by AGM. Inquiries: ring Pulborough 2934.

RAMAKRISHNA Vedanta Centre, 23 Norfolk Sq, W2: Sun 17 Sept Swami Tripurananda 'Is Vedanta Backward-Looking?' at 5 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 50p.

THEOSOPHY. Simple talks for inquirers: Sun. 17 Sept. 8 p.m. 'Universal Brotherhood'. S.a.e. for free pamphlet, book list. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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Conference

NEWS LINE
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1 day conference 'THE ARMED FORCES & THE TRADE UNIONS'. Sun, 17 Sept, 3 p.m., Wembley Conference Centre. Credentials: £1 from ALEX MITCHELL, CONFERENCE SECRETARY, 21b OLD TOWN, CLAPHAM SW4. 01-720 2000

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